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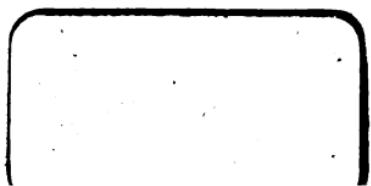
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Stories of the Saints





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STORIES OF THE SAINTS.



STORIES OF THE SAINTS.

BY M. F. S.,

AUTHOR OF "LEGENDS OF THE SAINTS," "STORIES OF MARTYR PRIESTS," "STORIES OF HOLY LIVES," "TOM'S CRUCIFIX AND OTHER TALES," "FLUFFY," "THREE WISHES," "CATHERINE HAMILTON," "CATHERINE GROWN OLDER," ETC.

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Dedicated

TO

MARY IMMACULATE,

QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS, AND HELP OF CHRISTIANS.

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S. Alban.

A.D. 303.

VERULAM was a city of some importance in the time of the Romans, and Alban—the son of a noble family—dwelt there when the edicts of Diocletian against Christians began to be put in force throughout Britain.

He had travelled to Rome—then the seat of learning—for his education, but was now back again in his native land, little thinking that he should be its proto-martyr, he should shed his blood for a faith he then neither knew nor loved.

When Alban was sitting outside his house upon a certain summer evening, a man ap-

proached ; a man who was being pursued by those who desired his blood—the priest Amphibalus.

When he learned that the stranger was a Christian, it seemed the duty of a citizen to see that he did not escape ; yet Alban could not thus act.*

Voice approached, the sound of many feet came nearer, and with a sudden pity the young heathen drew the priest of God within his door and concealed him in an inner chamber.

No one suspected Alban of harbouring a Christian, so the pursuers hurried on through the streets of Verulam and yet could find no trace of their victim.

Close to the house of Alban there was a little dwelling in which a woman lived, who, having seen him admit a stranger, resolved to inform against him unless he would buy her secrecy with money. Through an accident, her purpose was delayed a day or two, during which time Alban was receiving from his

guest the light of God's truth, and ere they parted was made a Christian by Holy Baptism.

Dressed in the cloak of his young host and armed with his signet-ring, Amphibalus escaped from a little postern door, while Alban wrapped himself in the priest's garments to await what was coming. He was not afraid when the officers of Publius sought him, nor yet afraid as they hurried him away, crying :

"It is the Christian ! it is he who escaped us!"

For that night, the noble Alban was thrust into a dungeon with some malefactors who were awaiting their trial; when morning dawned he was dragged to the market-place of Verulam and commanded to offer sacrifice to Jupiter.

Still they thought their prisoner was Amphibalus, until the broad hat was knocked off in scorn ; then the fury of the judge was all the more violent because he had been mistaken.

He should be slain, this noble Alban, but not until he had been scourged with loaded whips—the terrible *plumbatae* of the Romans. There was not a cry, not a murmur from the victim of their cruelty, and Publius now orders instant execution.

Crowding, crushing upon each other, the assembled multitude poured out of the city to the hill of Holmhurst where Alban was to die; but a narrow bridge across a stream could not be cleared for the prisoner to pass over. Longing for death, he entreated his guards to take him a little farther up the river's banks, and there by a brief prayer to Heaven the waters divided, and Alban with his guards passed over dry-shod.

Convinced by this miracle that the Christian's God was all-powerful, the executioner pressed closer to the side of Alban. "What you believe, I believe. What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" he said.

"Confess yourself a Christian," cried the Saint. "Yours will be the baptism of blood."

So Alban passed first to the heavenly kingdom, followed by Heraclius, Britain's second martyr; while it is said that he who gave the stroke was at once visited by God's judgment, for his eyes dropped upon the ground at the same moment as the martyr's head.

Upon the spot of Alban's martyrdom a "church was built of wonderful workmanship," as the Venerable Bede relates, and upon the site of this was afterwards erected the great Benedictine Abbey of St. Albans, the abbot of which had precedence over all others because its patron was the first martyr of his land.

That abbey has passed out of the hands of Catholics for many a long year, the shrine robbed and the martyr's relics scattered; but a smaller and less stately building is rising near by, where the Holy Sacrifice is offered up to God, and where pilgrims to the spot on which England's first martyr shed his blood may pray in the words of the Church: "O God, who hast consecrated this day by the martyrdom of

blessed Alban, grant, we beseech Thee, that as we rejoice with him at his annual solemnity we may be ever fostered by his aid, through Jesus Christ Our Lord, Amen."





S. Vincent, M.

A.D. 304.

HIIS illustrious martyr of the early Church was born in the city of Saragossa, his father's name being Eutychius, and his mother's Enola. Valerius, Bishop of Saragossa, was the boy's chief instructor, but he, though a man of great learning and piety, was forced by reason of some impediment in his speech to devote himself chiefly to prayer and contemplation, so that a considerable part of Vincent's time after he was ordained deacon was given to assist the Bishop as he had opportunity.

At that time the Governor of Spain had already shown the most cruel hatred towards

Christians, and at the end of the year 303, an edict went forth for the seizure of both clergy and laity. Valerius and his deacon Vincent were among those conveyed in chains to Valencia, and in addition to other sufferings their persecutors allowed them to feel the pain of extreme hunger, believing it would force them to give up the Christian faith.

Upon their first appearance before Datian, he offered them great rewards if they would sacrifice to the pagan gods; he tried the effect of mild language, and represented to S. Vincent the bright prospects life had to offer one so young.

But Christ's servants were not thus to be moved, and as Valerius could not speak much by reason of his infirmity, Vincent made his profession of faith in the name of both, thus rousing the anger of Datian, who sentenced the Bishop to exile. Vincent was remanded to prison, where his body was stretched upon the rack, torn with iron hooks, and otherwise

tortured, yet nothing could shake his faith, nothing abate his courage.

At a loss to comprehend such fortitude and firmness in the young deacon, the Governor began to suspect that they who had the task of torturing him were too merciful to their victim, so he ordered them to be severely beaten.

But when he saw for himself the agony which Vincent endured without complaint, Datian begged him to purchase his deliverance, which should be done if he would give up his Christian books! It was a useless appeal—the young deacon heeded it not, so he was taken down from the rack to endure a still more cruel torture.

An iron frame was produced called “The Question.” It had sharp bars running across it, and a fire was kindled beneath to make the entire frame red-hot, and upon this bed the martyr was bound, still smiling, with his face up-turned to heaven.

They kept him there until they feared he

would die, but still he prayed to the God of Christians, and still he refused to give up the faith for which he suffered.

At last his enemies tore Vincent from the frame—they did not want him to pass from their cruel hands so soon—and he was taken back to his prison and laid in a dark dungeon strewn with broken vessels and sharp stones, so that his bruised and burnt body could have no rest, and his feet were tightly fastened.

But God had not forgotten His servant, and as he lay there, the miserable dungeon was illumined by a light from heaven, the floor seemed strewn with fragrant flowers, and his bonds were loosed, while angel voices sung harmoniously in his ears. The jailer was aroused by these sounds, and looking in was so amazed by what he beheld that he at once declared his belief in the Christian's God.

This news travelled to the cruel Datian, who was very angry; yet he gave orders for a

brief respite to be granted to Vincent, probably with the hope that he might gain strength for further tortures.

This however was God's means of sending comfort to His servant, for a few brave Christians now came to him and provided him with a softer bed, upon which he died as soon as he was laid there, being the 22nd day of January, A.D. 304.

The martyr had escaped the rage of his persecutors at last, but they vented it upon his lifeless body, which was first cast out into a field to become the prey of beasts and afterwards tossed into the sea. But during the night the waves cast the martyr's remains upon the shore, and some of the Christians discovering it, found means of burying it in a humble little chapel near Valencia.

After the persecution had ceased, the body was removed from its first resting-place and buried with great pomp beneath the altar of the principal church. In ancient paintings

S. Vincent often is mistaken for S. Laurence, because he is vested as a deacon and bears a palm, and the instrument of his torture is much in the form of the gridiron upon which S. Laurence suffered martyrdom.





S. Martin, Bp.

A.D. 397.

BOUT the year 316 Martin was born into the world wherein he afterwards did so much for the glory of God and the good of men.

His father had recently removed with his family to Pavia, and here the youth of S. Martin was spent. Brought up in a pagan household, the child yet received the grace of becoming a Christian, and was admitted as a catechumen at ten years old. Thus signed upon the forehead with the Cross as the custom of those days was, Martin began to receive instruction in the mysteries of the Faith.

The Emperor Constantius had issued a

decree that the children of soldiers should have their names enrolled as future soldiers of the empire, and thus upon entering his fifteenth year Martin was compelled to take up the military profession ; but amidst temptation he was enabled to live as a Christian youth, and we hear that he would give the whole of his pay in alms to the poor.

Many stories of his generosity might be given, but there is one without which no sketch of his life would be complete.

Upon a winter's day, a day of severe frost and cold, the Saint met a poor man at the gate of Amiens, who implored the assistance of those that passed by. He had scarcely any clothing to shield him from the inclemency of the weather, his body was emaciated, and S. Martin's heart was pierced with sorrow at the spectacle of such misery.

Unfortunately he had parted with his last coin, but resolving to do what he could, the Saint cut his soldier's cloak in two and gave one half to the beggar.

As he slept that night, Martin dreaming saw the Lord of Heaven enveloped in the half of the cloak he had bestowed upon the poor man at the gate of Amiens, and as he gazed with wonder at the vision, a heavenly voice said :

“ Martin, who is but a catechumen, hath covered Thee with his garment.”

The youth awoke full of love and zeal; he begged earnestly that he might receive the grace of Baptism without longer waiting, and his request was granted, he being then in his eighteenth year.

For two more years he must serve while the invaders were being expelled from Gaul, but at the first opportunity Martin asked his discharge.

The Emperor reproached him, and charged him with unsoldierly fear of an engagement expected on the morrow, but Martin replied that he was ready to appear unarmed, except by the sign of the Cross, at the head of his troop—a proposal which was not accepted, be-

cause terms of peace were arranged, and thus his discharge was given him.

About the year 350 Martin heard of the fame of S. Hilary, and wishing to be near him went to live at Poitiers. S. Hilary soon wished to ordain him a deacon, but in his humility he felt unfit for such an office, and would only consent to be made an exorcist.

In a dream he received so strong a desire to go and visit his parents, that S. Hilary gave him permission upon the condition of his return to Poitiers. As he went upon his journey, robbers waylaid S. Martin and threatened his life—one even stood over him with a drawn sword, but at sight of the Saint's courage he threw away the weapon and declared that he too would be a Christian.

It was a happiness to Martin to see his mother and many of his friends converted to God, but the Arians, then so powerful, grew angry and beat him severely with rods, driving him out of their towns.

As he returned through Italy, S. Martin

found that S. Hilary had been exiled from his bishopric, so he stopped at Milan and lived a solitary life in the vicinity of Genoa until, about 360, Hilary was restored to his bishopric and Martin again joined him.

Upon a small estate not far from Poitiers, a monastery—said to be the first in Gaul—was founded by S. Martin, but soon afterwards he was forced to accept the See of Tours.

At first the new-made Bishop dwelt in a humble little cell close to the cathedral, but finding that here he could not maintain the strict retirement his soul desired, he crossed the Loire and took up his abode upon a high rock overlooking the river.

Others came, begging to join him here, and a monastery was thus founded where the holy Bishop spent a great part of his life. Upon the 8th November, 397, he died, and the distinction of a public festival was granted to him, although up to that time it was an honour given only to those who had suffered torment or died as martyrs for the love of Christ.

S. Martin has always been much honoured in every Christian country, but especially in France. When the Frankish kings were engaged in war, they used to carry with them a *châsse*, containing S. Martin's cope, into the field. This was kept as a precious relic in a tent reserved for the celebration of Mass. After a time the cope was no longer carried to battle, but in its place was a blue banner divided into three points, intended to represent the cloak of S. Martin.

S. Martin is always represented as a priest or Bishop with a beggar at his feet, or in more historical representations, he takes the form of a soldier on horseback dividing with his sword the cloak which he is about to share with a poor beggar standing near.





S. Augustine.

A.D. 430.

T was in the year 354, that the gentle, holy Monica gave birth to a son by whom she was destined to suffer much bitter sorrow, yet sorrow which in the end became joy and thanksgiving.

From the life of this sainted mother we learn something of the care with which she trained Augustine's early years, and of the prayers by which she sought the blessing of Heaven upon his life when he had to do battle with the world's temptations.

The boy began at an early age to show indications of future talent, and at the town of Madaura he advanced in the study of

grammar and rhetoric until at fifteen years of age he returned to his home for a year.

By that time, Patricius, his pagan father, had means of sending Augustine to finish his education at Carthage; where he was constantly taking part in dangerous amusements which led him away from God and into the power of the Evil One.

Deeply as he sinned at this period of his life, Augustine did not throw aside his studies, and even would read in the Holy Scriptures, although their simplicity caused him to turn away from what appeared suited only to the capacity of a child.

It must have been difficult indeed for the holy Monica to believe in the assurance God had given her that the life of this son would be good and holy—only a very perfect and simple faith could have borne the test. But such a faith had S. Monica, and the sinful excesses of her unhappy son only served to increase the earnestness of her prayers, the

constant offering up of her sufferings and penances for his conversion.

In those early times certain heresies were rife; one of these—the heresy of the Manichees, was one which continued the longest. To this delusion Augustine fell a prey, to the great grief of his mother, who was however somewhat consoled when a holy bishop to whom she revealed her distress, said to her:

“ Go away, and God bless thee. The son of these tears shall not be lost.”

After a time, Augustine began to distrust the Manichean heresy, and turned to a thorough disbelief in all systems of religion.

It was not long afterwards that, through the interest of friends, he was appointed professor of rhetoric at Milan, in which city he arrived in the year 384. During his stay there, Augustine was strongly moved by the preaching of S. Ambrose to repentance and the desire of being a Christian, and gradually his mind was enlightened to the knowledge and

love of the truth, so that in the year 387 he received baptism.

It had been God's purpose to prolong the life of S. Monica until she received this answer to her years of prayer ; she died soon afterwards, and Augustine went to his old home near Tagaste, where he gathered round him a few friends who likewise wished to devote themselves to penance, prayer, and good works.

Thus began the Order of S. Augustine, which afterwards became so widely spread. Unanimity and charity were the two special graces which were to distinguish the brethren, that so they might be of one heart and soul in the Lord.

Even their garments were held as common property, one brother taking charge of all. During the day any one might retire to the oratory for private prayer, and in community the office was recited at the appointed hours.

Although the fasting was strict, those who

were weak or ill were exempted from its obligation. One of the chief duties of the brethren was the care of the poor.

The nuns of the Order of S. Augustine were governed by much the same rule, and though not strictly enclosed, they were enjoined to preserve great recollection when called outside their convent by necessity, and always to be in the company of at least three others.

When Augustine had spent some two years at Tagaste, he was presented to Valerius, Bishop, for Holy Orders, to which he was admitted in the year 391.

But desiring still to live in great retirement, the Bishop allowed him to use a house belonging to the church of Hippo, and here Augustine collected a community of such who desired the more perfect service of Almighty God.

In the year 395 he was consecrated a Bishop, to be coadjutor with Valerius, upon whose death he remained in sole charge of the diocese.

Elevated now to a high dignity, S. Augustine still preserved great simplicity of life, but feeling it a duty to show greater hospitality than was suitable or convenient to his brethren, he left them to reside in the Bishop's house, where he formed a community of clergy—the foundation of the Order of the Augustinian Canons.

In the year 430, Africa was desolated by the incursions of the Vandals, and with extreme grief Augustine beheld the danger, not only of the body, but of the souls of many. He with his brethren cried earnestly to God for mercy and help; but in the third month of the siege, a violent fever attacked him, which resulted in his death upon the 28th of August, when he had entered his seventy-seventh year.

For nearly fifty years Augustine's body rested in the Church of S. Stephen, but when the African bishops were banished into Sardinia, they carried it with them. About the year 710, the remains of the Saint were

translated to Pavia, and taken into the Church of S. Peter in that city.

Very numerous are the writings of S. Augustine—one of the most noted being a lasting memorial of his deep penitence, entitled his “Confessions.”

The ordinary emblem of S. Augustine is a heart, sometimes burning, as a type of his ardent zeal and charity. He is frequently also represented with the Holy Child by his side, holding in His hand a shell. This refers to a vision once granted the Saint with which we may fitly close the story of his life.

While one day walking upon the sea-shore thinking deeply of heavenly things, he beheld a little child who was engaged in the attempt to fill a hole in the sand with water taken from the sea in a shell. The Saint asked the child what he was about.

“I want to empty the sea into this hole,” replied the little one.

“Child! it is impossible!” cried Augustine.

“Not more impossible than for you to

comprehend what you are now meditating upon," replied the vision, immediately vanishing, while Augustine pondered in his heart the lesson God had thus miraculously impressed upon him.





S. Clotilde.

A.D 492.

CN the history of the saintly Queen of France, we see how the greatness of this world, the glory of the throne, and the robes of royalty may be made means of bringing the soul to perfection.

Clotilde was the daughter of Chilperic, who with his wife and sons was sacrificed to the ambition of his brother, the King of the Burgundians, who, in destroying their lives, believed he was ridding himself of dangerous rivals.

But the two daughters of the family met with a different fate; the elder was placed in a religious house, the younger, Clotilde, was

forced to dwell in the court of the murderer of her father and mother.

The Arian heresy was then devastating the Church, there was evil all around her, and yet this young girl preserved both faith and innocence, keeping herself, by God's grace, "unspotted from the world."

The fame of Clotilde's beauty and virtue became noised abroad, and when Clovis, King of the Franks, heard of her, he sent messengers to seek for him her hand in marriage.

Clovis was a pagan, and the young princess would accept him only upon condition that she should have liberty to practise her religion, and as this was agreed to, the marriage was celebrated at Soissons in the year 493.

Looking now at Clotilde, we do not see her led away by the effect of wealth and greatness; her first care was to construct a little oratory in her husband's palace where she might retire to ask that light and grace she needed so much in her new and untried life.

Nor did she now omit the practice of

penance, but loving mortification, she kept it secret, and used it with such prudence that no duty belonging to her state as a wife and queen should be omitted.

The pagans by whom Clotilde was surrounded were astonished by a perfection they could not help perceiving, and especially did they notice her great charity and sweetness to the poor.

Thus by the example and persuasion of a holy life, the young queen was preparing the way for the conversion of her husband and for her husband's kingdom. Finding that Clovis became closely attached to her and pleased with her daily life of duty, she began speaking to him of the Christian faith, striving to make him realise the infinite beauty and excellence of Christ, and the foolishness of idolatry.

The King would listen to his wife's words, but as yet he was unconvinced—the hour of his awakening was not so soon. When their first child was born, Clotilde obtained his promise to have it baptised, but God saw fit

to try the faith and love of the mother—the little one died as soon as it had received the sacrament of regeneration.

“I might have known how it would be,” cried Clovis. “This child has died because he was baptised in the name of your God. Ah ! had I but placed him under the protection of my gods, he would now be alive and well.”

“And I,” replied Clotilde, “can but rejoice that God has permitted me to give birth to a child who shall thus early share in the glory of the Heavenly Kingdom.”

Looking at this event in the light of nature, it would seem that this was a misfortune which must hinder the conversion of Clovis; but God’s ways are not as our ways, and Clotilde had a firm strong faith which told her that some great good would spring from her deep sorrow.

A year later another child was given to the royal parents, who also was baptised and received the name of Clodomir. Very soon the little one was seized with dangerous illness,

and Clovis was both angry and despairing. Clotilde gave herself to earnest prayer, and in answer to these supplications, the child was cured so rapidly that it seemed a miracle.

When the King saw his infant son regaining health, he grew calmer, and acknowledged that the Christian's God was powerful, upon which Clotilde entreated him to renounce his idolatry. Upon another occasion when he seemed unwontedly gentle and kind, his saintly Queen ventured again to plead with him, but without success, for he said that his abandonment of paganism would occasion a revolt among his subjects.

But in spite of these discouragements, the hour was coming when Clotilde should not entreat in vain.

Clovis was at war with his German neighbours, his army was in confusion, and it seemed that his enemies must conquer. In his fear he invoked his heathen gods, but they could neither hear nor answer him. Suddenly he recalled all that Clotilde had said to him of

Christ, and he remembered, too, how her prayers for the life of their little child had been granted. So he declared that if upon a certain day he gained a victory over the foe, he would indeed be a Christian. The battle was a hard one, but suddenly the aspect of affairs changed, the Germans were seized with a panic, and were completely routed. This glad news reached the ears of Clotilde by the couriers whom the King had despatched to her, and who also brought from him the assurance that he would be faithful to the promise he had made.

The Queen made thanksgiving to God for His great favours, and besought Him to strengthen Clovis in his purpose of entering the Christian Church.

He who undertook the instruction of the King was one whom we honour now as S. Remigius. After being sufficiently enlightened in the doctrines of Christianity, Clovis received baptism with about three thousand of his people, who also had renounced idolatry. At

this ceremony a miracle was granted from Heaven. The crowd pressed so closely upon the Bishop that it was impossible for the holy oil to be passed to him ; but an angel appeared in the midst bearing a phial ready filled, which he gave into the hand of S. Remigius. This phial was preserved in the church, and it was with this miraculous oil that the kings of France were consecrated.

Clovis was thus the only Catholic king of his time, for other princes, professedly Christian, were infected with the Arian heresy ; it is he who was the first of the long line of kings who by their fidelity to the Holy See have merited the title of the eldest sons of the Church.

From the time of his baptism, Clotilde strove to aid her husband in living a pure and Christian life, and it was at her instance that he built in Paris a church in honour of SS. Peter and Paul, which was replaced by the Pantheon, desecrated and profaned now by the late republic.

Clovis had a marked devotion to S. Martin, whose tomb in Tours he visited. To the sovereign Pontiff he sent a magnificent crown as an act of homage to him as representing Christ in the world.

After the King's death in 511, Clotilde was left with three children. Her heart was torn with grief at the division and disagreement which troubled the kingdom over which her sons ruled. We cannot wonder if the Saint longed ardently for the peace and rest of Heaven; but a still greater sorrow was to fall upon her before she was set free from earth. Childebert and Clotaire murdered the sons of their elder brother Clodomir in order to take from them the kingdom of Orleans, and S. Clotilde was so overwhelmed with grief at their sinful act that she retired to a religious house, there by prayer and penance to implore God's mercy upon her unhappy children.

Thirty days before her death she spoke of what was coming, and sent for the two murderers, begging them to seek pardon for

the past, and grace to live as Christian kings. This done, she turned her thoughts to her approaching end, and after receiving the last sacraments and making a public profession of the Christian faith, she gave up her soul to God on the 3rd June, 545. Her remains were taken to the church of S. Geneviève and placed by the side of the shepherdess patron of France.





S. Brigid.

A.D. 523.

BN the land to which S. Patrick brought God's truth, a child was born about the year 453, whom we venerate now as Brigid, the sainted virgin and abbess of the Church.

Her parents were Christians and of noble family, and the little maiden early showed signs of piety, and was remarkable for her purity of heart and her charity to others. It was her happiness to listen sometimes to the teaching of Patrick, and the lessons thus learned ran pleasantly in her mind as she went about the simple duties of her daily life.

In those days, women high in rank were wont to milk the cows and churn the butter, so Brigid, at her mother's bidding, must work with the rest and complete a certain task at some appointed hour.

One day as she was busy at the churn, she thought so much of the poor—God's dearly-loved poor—that she gave her butter when made to some needy creature who came that way, and returned to her mother with an empty jar.

She began to fear the displeasure of Brocessa, which in the moment of desire to help a fellow-creature had been forgotten, so with all her heart she prayed Almighty God to help and deliver her.

It was not in vain. Rather than leave the simple, believing prayer unanswered, God must work a miracle, and thus Brigid's jar was filled on the instant with sweet, pure butter, which weighed more than any of the rest.

As the little maiden grew to womanhood, it

was the desire of her parents to marry her suitably, but Brigid had consecrated herself to God, and to Him she turned in her difficulty, begging that she might lose the beauty which rendered her pleasing to the eyes of men.

Again she was answered, for immediately one eye began to swell so terribly that it burst in her head, and a messenger then waiting to carry back an answer to one of her rich suitors, took back instead the tidings that the once lovely Brigid was a spectacle most terrible and repulsive to behold.

She suffered agony, but her heart was full of joy, for her parents now cheerfully consented to her taking the religious habit, and applying to the Bishop Maceleus, Brigid received from him the white tunic and veil she had so much desired.

Our Divine Lord was pleased to show the favour with which He regarded His servant, by restoring her face to its former beauty at the moment she pronounced her vows, and further by permitting that the wooden support

of the altar on which her hand rested as she bent forward to receive the veil, should at that moment become fresh and verdant, and afterwards be the means of many miraculous cures.

Seven or eight other maidens seem to have entered the religious state with the holy Brigid, but many more were added to the little sisterhood over whom she ruled by command of the Bishop.

So quickly did her reputation increase that women of all ages flocked to her, begging for admission, and it became necessary to open convents in different parts of Ireland for their reception.

About the year 480, the people of Leinster entreated Brigid to come and dwell among them, and she agreed to their wish. In their grateful joy they gave to her a piece of land, on which she built her convent under shadow of a magnificent oak, which continued to flourish long centuries after the holy nun had passed to her reward.

It was God's Will to perform many miraculous signs of His favour towards S. Brigid.

Upon a certain day she was entertaining a guest by whom she observed, as it seemed, the devil sitting.

"I would that I too could see him," cried the lady, when she was told of it.

"We must first sign your eyes with the sign of the Cross," said S. Brigid; "otherwise you could not bear the sight of your terrible enemy."

No sooner had the sacred sign been made upon the eyelids of the lady, than she beheld the Evil One black and terrible, with a head of large size, and breathing out fire from his mouth and nostrils.

S. Brigid commanded him to speak, and to her he said that he dwelt with that maiden and had part with her by reason of her slothfulness.

"See," said the Saint; "this is the acquaintance you have been for so many years cultivating." And alarmed and warned, the

maiden struggled to overcome her besetting sin, and was thus delivered from the power of the Evil One.

Near her convent at Kildare, S. Brigid was once walking with some of her spiritual daughters, when she observed a young man hurrying along with a speed and appearance altogether unsuited for one whom she knew was in training for the office of priest.

The good nun believed that his levity of manner was harmful to himself and others, therefore she sought to give him a lesson without offending charity.

“Whither are you running in such haste?” she asked as he approached her, and in jest he answered that he was “running to the Kingdom of Heaven.”

“I would that I, my brother, were worthy to run along with you to-day to that kingdom,” replied the Saint. “Pray for me that I may one day arrive there.”

The reproof sank deeply into the heart of the young man; he felt so conscious of his

faults that he began a life of true penance and holiness. That day S. Brigid told him that it should be his office to bring her the Body and Blood of her Lord at the hour of her death ; and the prophecy was fulfilled, for he, once so careless, but afterwards known by the name of Nennidith, the clean-handed, stood by the side of the departing Saint bearing the most holy Viaticum, when, after her seventy years of life were ended, she was received into the presence of the Queen of Saints in glory everlasting.





S. Boniface.

A.D. 755.

AT Crediton, somewhere about the year 680, there dwelt a Saxon family of royal blood and of great piety, to whom God gave a child who received the name of Winfred—a name afterwards changed to that of Boniface.

At that time there were no settled priests ruling over their different parishes in England as now. They travelled from one place to another to offer the Holy Mass and administer the sacraments, taking up their abode meanwhile with some family who could receive them. Thus it happened that the father of little Winfred frequently entertained the

ministers of God beneath his roof, and at so early an age as three years the child would leave all his amusements at the sight of a monk, and beg for stories of the Saints, or ask simple questions about God and heaven.

Scarcely was Winfred six years old than he declared his wish to give himself to God's service; but his father, not unnaturally, smiled at the thought which appeared but a childish fancy, and gazing at the boy's beautiful countenance, felt it would be hard indeed to bury one so gifted with talent, so attractive in manner and appearance, in the seclusion of the cloister.

But soon the father found that Winfred's was not the passing fancy of a little child, and he grew alarmed, nay, almost displeased. When the boy talked of his desire, they sought to work upon his sensitive and loving nature by speaking of the necessary separation from family and friends; they told, too, of the loss of wealth and rank, and yet the little Winfred remained of the same mind, nor

faltered for a moment in the wish to belong wholly to God.

The father now fell seriously ill, and believing he was upon his death-bed, he began to think seriously, and it was clear to him then that he had been thwarting his little son's desire after heavenly things. Repenting of this, he strove to make amends by sending the boy without delay to a Benedictine house not far from Exeter.

Though but little more than six years old, Winfred did not grieve to bid farewell to home; in spite of his noble birth, he felt a joy in wearing the same coarse habit as the monks wore, in taking his small share in the hard labour which in that age formed part of their daily life, in eating the same poor and scanty food. If all this seemed at times difficult, the little boy kept his mind fixed upon the example of Jesus and the Saints, and tried to be both cheerful and obedient. Winfred's great joy was even then found in prayer, and with reading and study the years passed

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swiftly and peacefully along, until he was a child no longer, but an intelligent and holy youth.

He now was sent from Exminster to the abbey of Nutscelle in Hampshire, which was more suited to his future studies, being not only one of the best schools in England, but possessing a valuable library.

Here Winfred made rapid progress in learning, and became famous for his excellent manner of instructing others in the truths of the Holy Scriptures, which had just been translated into Anglo-Saxon by the Venerable Bede.

At thirty years of age, Winfred was ordained priest, and soon afterwards was chosen to undertake some important business with the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which he managed so well that it led to his being engaged in several other matters which required great ability and judgment.

While rising rapidly in the esteem of men, Winfred ever maintained the humble, docile

spirit of a child, and this sweetness of character gave him a wonderful influence over human hearts.

It was now that a strong desire to teach the Faith to their kindred in Germany began to kindle in the Anglo-Saxon people ; many went forth to those wild forests to preach the Gospel, and among them Winfred, who in the year 716 embarked for Friesland.

But war was raging there, the time for converting the Frisians was later, and thus Winfred returned to Nutselle, and was soon afterward chosen Abbot in place of Winbert, who had lately died.

But Winfred's heart was away in the wild country where there were souls to be won for God, and he only consented to govern the community until another could be found for the office ; that done, he left England for the second time in the early spring of 718, and never returned to it again.

He first went to Rome, joining some pilgrims in a wearying foot-journey, depending

chiefly for food upon the charity of those they met with, and it was autumn before Winfred arrived in the Eternal City.

After visiting the tomb of S. Peter, he presented himself to Pope Gregory II., who received him affectionately and approved his plans, but kept him during the winter at Rome, frequently instructing him as to his future work in evangelising the Germans.

For thirty years Winfred travelled about doing God's work amidst difficulties and hardships which cannot be described, but he was successful in converting thousands of pagans, and in instructing many who, though Christian in name, were ignorant in the matter of the doctrines of their faith.

When other monks and nuns came out from England to help in the missionary work, Winfred built rough huts of wood to serve as churches and convents for them, nor did they mind how poor and hard was their life if so they might bring others into the fold of Christ.

Winfred made a second visit to Rome in the year 723, where he received the name of Boniface and was consecrated Bishop; later he was made Papal Legate and Archbishop, and about 748 was raised to the dignity of Archbishop of Mayence and Primate of Germany.

Great in rank, in esteem, in learning, Boniface remained the same humble simple soul as he had been when he was the monk Winfred in the quiet abbey of Nutselle, and pure of heart as in the days of childhood in his early home.

Many a time he pleaded his age as an excuse for being released from his dignities, but never did he plead it as an excuse from labour.

At length, in the spring of 753, Boniface received permission to transfer the Arch-bishopric to one of his friends and pupils, Lullus, and free from that duty, he now, at seventy years of age, started on a mission to Friesland.

With eleven companions, the venerable

white-haired old man began his labours, preaching with an eloquence which drew crowds to listen and afterwards to repent and turn from their sins.

On the fifth day of June, 755, a large number of converts were to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Quietly reading the Gospels he awaited their arrival, never heeding an increasing sound as of voices, for he believed it to be his expected friends drawing nearer. Suddenly the attendants rushed to S. Boniface to tell him that a tribe of Pagans was speeding along to attack him, and they would have armed themselves for resistance had not the aged man bid them remember the example of Christ and return good for evil. Turning to his clergy he begged them not to cast away the reward of their long devotion, but to meet death firmly and manfully, that so Christ might receive them into joy everlasting. As he spoke, the Pagans rushed upon the little group, cutting down one after another, and, last of all, the holy Boniface. As he felt

the blow descending, he raised his hand to Heaven, still clasping the Gospels which he had been reading, and the book was almost cut in two by the stroke of the savage's dirk, which despatched him from earth to the eternal joy of heaven. The 5th of June is kept as the festival of this great Saint and martyr, whose name is held in special veneration in Germany to this day.





S. Homobonus.

A.D. 1197.

HMERCHANT of Cremona, in Lombardy, named Lucinge, had a little son born to him, to whom in baptism he gave the name of Homobonus.

As the child grew older, he received little, if any, school education, and was early trained to assist in his father's shop, but although thus deficient in learning, the principles of virtue and piety had sunk deeply into his heart, bringing forth the fruit of a very holy life.

From infancy, Homobonus seemed to have a horror of the slightest deviation from truth, and rather than commit a sin he would have

willingly endured any misfortune, and as he grew into manhood he was enabled, by God's grace, to maintain an upright and honourable course amidst the many temptations and difficulties attendant upon a business life.

By the wish of his parents, Homobonus married a pious girl who admirably fulfilled her duty to her husband, and guided the household with great prudence.

There were times when she tried to suggest that his excessive charity might reduce his own family to poverty, but this was done with mildness and discretion, nor was she angry when Homobonus assured her that the good God would never permit them to suffer for what he bestowed upon the poor.

The vexations, injuries and annoyances which come to all who take an active part in the business of the world, were shared by Homobonus, but so amiably and courteously did he conduct his dealings with his fellow-men, and so meekly did he endure any injustice, that the people of Cremona often

declared that he must have been born without human passions.

Although his days were fully occupied, Homobonus always found time for prayer, and while attending to his worldly concerns, he kept raising his heart and mind to God by frequent aspirations, so that his shop was as truly a place of prayer as the retirement of his own chamber.

Doubtless he must often have been wearied both in mind and body by the engagements of the day, yet night always saw this holy man hastening to assist at matins in the church of S. Giles, where he remained until after the first Mass so wrapt in contemplation that he edified all who saw him.

Sundays and holydays were set apart entirely for devotion and prayer and works of kindness and mercy.

Thus in the exercise of the highest Christian virtue, years passed by and brought Homobonus further towards the perfection to which he aspired. His work was a prayer, his life

was a prayer, and it was in prayer also that God called His servant from earth at last upon the 13th November, 1197.

He had been assisting at matins according to his usual custom, remaining kneeling before the crucifix till Mass began. At the Gloria he was seen extending his arms in the form of a cross, and immediately after he fell prostrate on the ground, but this caused no surprise, for it was believed he did it out of devotion. But when he did not rise up at the Gospel, some one approached and gently touching him found that he had quietly passed away into the presence of God.

After the necessary examination, the bull of his canonisation was published in 1198, and in the year 1356 the body of S. Homobonus was disinterred and translated to the cathedral, although his head remained at the church of S. Giles where he had offered so many prayers, and where at last his pure soul had been taken from earth to the glory of heaven.



S. Hugh, Bp. of Lincoln.

A.D. 1200.

AWAY in a monastery in Burgundy, there was in olden time a boy beloved of all the brethren for his sweetness and piety, who from the age of seven or eight years had been confided to their care for education.

The mother of the little Hugh had died in his early childhood, and his father, after serving for many years as an officer in the army, had retired to end his days in the community with whom his young son was dwelling.

A very holy old priest was Hugh's chief instructor, and his wise counsels sunk very

deeply into the boy's heart, inspiring him with the desire to give himself wholly to the service of God in some way which he asked light to understand.

When he was about nineteen years of age the answer to his prayer was given. He had gone in the Abbot's company to visit the Chartreuse near Grenoble, and in the silence of that retreat Hugh seemed to hear a call from God to become one of the monks there.

He returned however to the religious house where he had been brought up, but his desire grew stronger, and so he went back to the Chartreuse, begging to receive the habit.

It was God's Will to permit His servant to be greatly tried by many and severe interior conflicts, but even amidst these trials he was often given Divine consolations, and by fervent prayer and the practice of penance, he overcame the assaults of the Evil One.

As the time drew near when Hugh hoped

to be ordained to the priesthood, one of the elder Fathers, according to the custom of the Order, asked him if he indeed desired this great grace; to which question the young man replied that he wished for it most earnestly. Fearing that he might have too little realisation of the dignity and responsibility of the priestly office, and wishing also to try him, the old Father exclaimed :

“ How dare you aspire to a state to which no one, however holy, is advanced but with trembling, and by constraint ? ”

At this severe humiliation, Hugh fell prostrate at the feet of the holy monk, and with many tears entreated for pardon, whereupon the other told him that he did not doubt the purity of his intention, and moreover predicted that he would be not only a priest, but at some future time a bishop.

Ten years passed by, and Hugh was made procurator of the monastery, and with such prudence did he acquit himself of the charge, that he became famous throughout that part

of France as a model of wisdom and also a model of piety.

The first English house of Carthusian monks was founded at Witham, in Somersetshire, by King Henry II., but under the rule of the two first priors such great difficulties beset the undertaking that it seemed impossible for the community to be settled.

In this emergency, the King sent to the Chartreuse begging that the monk Hugh, of whom men spoke as one who was very wise as well as very holy, might be sent to govern the English monastery, and after consideration it was decided that he should return with the messenger to England.

Hugh went straight to Witham, and at once gave great help to the small number of brethren he found there; but although he had refrained from presenting himself at Court, the King sent for him and made him many presents as well as providing him with what was necessary to complete the building of the monastery. Hugh now toiled with his own

hands as if he had been one of the lowest of the brethren ; he carried stones and mortar upon his own shoulders, and the humility of his every action gained the hearts of those who had been most bitterly opposed to the foundation of the monastery.

It was not long before S. Hugh was the Father of a large community, each one of which was aiming at great perfection of life.

Upon one occasion, King Henry was returning from Normandy with his army, and a furious storm arose which alarmed the sailors. Every one on board called upon God to deliver them from their peril, but the storm still raged, until the King cried out :

“ O God, whom the Prior of Witham so truly serves, vouchsafe through his merits and intercession to regard with an eye of pity our distress and affliction.”

Scarcely had he spoken the words than the winds and waves calmed, and the whole company continued their voyage in safety, praising and blessing God.

But the time came when S. Hugh was obliged to leave Witham and receive the episcopal consecration to the See of Lincoln in September, 1186.

He engaged priests of great learning to assist him, but he also worked hard himself, sometimes spending whole days without tasting food, so busy was he in administering the sacraments, consecrating churches, and other duties of his state.

There was a hospital of lepers which he specially loved to visit, nor did he shrink from touching with his lips the ulcers of the poor sufferers. Once some one observing him, said scornfully that "S. Martin was wont to do the same, but the touch of *his* lips conveyed healing to the leper."

The holy Bishop meekly replied :

"S. Martin's kiss did indeed heal the lepers' sores, but their kiss heals my soul."

Great was S. Hugh's recollection, so great that he observed nothing which he passed upon the road, but recited his Office as he

made his journeys, and neither fatigue nor danger would interrupt him.

But while busy in his episcopal duties, S. Hugh did not forget his beloved monastery at Witham, and once at least in each year he retired there to meditate and pray, reviewing the inclinations of his heart, the mainspring of his actions, and how he was fulfilling the duties devolving upon him. Frequently did he beg to be relieved from his office, for he loved better to be lonely and obscure than to hold authority, but such requests were of no avail.

Henry II., so impatient of control, was still somewhat in awe of S. Hugh, who never feared to rebuke him when such rebuke was merited. Some unjust forest laws existed at that time, so that should any one kill or injure a wild beast or game, the King's foresters had power to seize such an one and even in some cases to put him to death.

Once these rangers seized a clerk and condemned him to pay a large sum of money as a

fine, although the offence was very slight, upon which S. Hugh passed sentence of ex-communication upon the chief of them.

The King was violently angry, but strong in his determination to do right, S. Hugh refused to absolve the ranger until he owned his sin and submitted himself to do penance for it.

Upon this, Henry sent for the Bishop and reproached him with ingratitude for the many favours he had received.

S. Hugh, with much gentleness, tried to show how in such a matter he must have regard to God's glory rather than the royal pleasure, and at length the King saw that the Bishop was right, and commanded the ranger to ask pardon. He did so, and receiving absolution, became afterwards deeply attached to the holy man who had dealt with him so severely yet so justly.

When King Richard, and in his turn King John succeeded to the crown, the Bishop of Lincoln was still the same unsparing rebuker

of evil. John despatched him as an ambassador to the King of France to conclude a treaty of peace between the two countries, and this being successfully arranged, S. Hugh took the opportunity of visiting his brethren at the Great Chartreuse.

On his return to London he found that a great national council was about to be opened at Lincoln, at which he purposed being present, but he was prevented carrying out this plan by a sudden and violent attack of fever.

Those around him were praying for his recovery, but it was given S. Hugh to know that God's will for him was death, not life, and he spoke calmly of his approaching end. All his time now was given to prayer, all his thoughts to Jesus, His Virgin Mother and the Saints, and he received the last sacraments of the Church although he lingered on until the 17th November.

Upon that day he begged some of the priests and monks to recite the Divine Office in his

chamber, and when they wept to think they were about to lose him he strove to give them consolation, but his voice failed. He then ordered the floor to be swept, and ashes to be strewn upon it in the form of a cross, and further insisted on being laid there while the office of Compline was said. At the *Nunc Dimittis* he passed calmly away into the presence of his Creator, being then sixty years of age, fifteen years of which he had been a Bishop. The body of the Saint was laid in the Cathedral of Lincoln, near the altar of S. John Baptist; but it was translated in 1222 to a place at the back of the high altar.

S. Hugh is usually represented in the coarse white habit of the Order of Carthusians, with a mitre on his head and the pastoral staff in his hand; sometimes he holds three flowers, and sometimes an angel is placed by his side defending him against lightning.

The only old church in England dedi-

cated in the name of this Saint is in Cornwall, but it is not positively known whether this is in honour of any local Saint so-called, or of S. Hugh the holy Bishop of Lincoln.





S. Edmund, C. Archbishop of Canterbury.

A.D. 1242.

EN those bygone days when one Faith illuminated the minds of learned and of simple men; when the love of Jesus in the Adorable Sacrament and Mary His Immaculate Mother reigned throughout the length and breadth of England; when, as yet, the voice of heresy had not been raised against truth, there dwelt in the town of Abingdon a pious tradesman and his wife, whose son was destined to become a great Saint.

They did not possess any great abundance of worldly wealth, yet Reynold Rich prospered sufficiently to feel that he had acquired enough to maintain and educate his children.

Guided by the Holy Ghost, and with the full consent of his wife Mabilia, Reynold retired to the monastery of Evesham, there to spend the remainder of his life in the more perfect service of God.

Though remaining in the world with the care of a family resting upon her, Mabilia resolved that she also would strive to sanctify her soul, and thus by constant prayer and the practice of great mortification she pressed forward with loving, generous heart in the way of perfection.

Already, by consenting to be without her husband's protection, Mabilia had made a great offering to God; yet, desiring to give Him more, her daily prayer was that He would accept her children for His service. Edmund was the eldest of these little ones. From a very early age the boy displayed a great dislike for the amusements and pleasures of the world, and an equally strong love of virtue and piety.

Every Sunday and holy day he made a rule

of reciting the whole Psalter before he broke his fast, and each Friday his sole repast was a little bread and water.

Mabilia strove to excite her young son to aspire to the highest perfection, but Edmund was ever ready to go beyond even her desires, although he kept his devotion and his acts of penance carefully concealed from the eyes of men.

He was, however, upon his guard lest self-will might creep in, and he prayed earnestly that every action might be for God's sole glory, untainted by any lower motive.

So Edmund Rich grew into a pious, holy youth; dutiful to his mother, kind and sweet to his companions, and always happy because his heart was at peace with God.

The first part of his life as a student was passed at Oxford, where it was soon discovered that he had no ordinary degree of genius; he applied himself, too, as one who remembers that diligent study is in itself a duty which the young owe to Almighty God.

But Edmund Rich did not lose his love of prayer; it was even stronger now than in his childish days—*stronger* because he realised more and more that in it lay his strength and safeguard.

So much did he dread the very appearance of evil, so well did he comprehend how easy it is to be led away by bad influence and example, that he refused to have any dealings whatever with those whose inclinations were not pure and right.

While still quite young, Edmund and his brother were sent to Paris for their further education, and fearing the effect of those many temptations with which pleasure ensnares souls, Mabilia entreated her sons to subdue and restrain nature by constant acts of penance. For this purpose she gave to each of them a hair-shirt, advising them to use it twice or thrice in the week.

When Edmund had been some time abroad, this good mother was taken seriously ill, and feeling the approach of death, she sent for him

that she might commend to his care his younger brother and two sisters, and receive her last blessing.

"Give me your blessing for them also," said Edmund; but Mabilia replied :

"In you I have given them my blessing; for through you they will abundantly share in the blessings of Heaven."

Thus left to watch over the family with no one to advise him, Edmund turned to God for guidance, and to his great joy he found that his sisters, about whom he had felt such anxiety, had no other wish than to serve God in the religious state.

Edmund's care was now to find a convent in which the rule was such as might advance them best in the way of perfection, and from which the world and its influences were most completely banished and the religious spirit most fervently maintained.

His choice fell at last upon the convent of Catesby in Northamptonshire, and there these two sisters became eminently holy, each

filling the office of Prioress before her death.

Thus relieved of a great charge, Edmund returned to pursue his studies in Paris, still faithful as ever to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, still shunning carefully every dangerous occasion, and guarding against levity even in the smaller actions of his life.

He could not have preserved himself thus pure and unspotted from the world but for his confidence in God, and also the vow of perfect chastity which he had made under the patronage of the most pure Virgin. While he studied, Edmund kept an image of this dear Patroness before his eyes; around it were representations of the chief mysteries of the Sacred Passion, and as he gazed upon them, there were moments when the young student forgot all else in thoughts of God.

The Church of S. Martin was that which he attended for daily Mass; each day also he assisted at Vespers, yet he found time for

much private prayer and for the performance of numerous works of charity.

Edmund's abstinence was wonderful, for he only eat once during the day, and then very sparingly. He would take his rest upon some hard bench or upon the floor, although he always had a bed prepared in his room that so he might conceal these austere practices.

After taking his degree as M.A., S. Edmund spent six years in giving instructions in the study of mathematics, but during this time he prayed earnestly that his mind might not be diverted from heavenly things.

One night he had a dream which greatly influenced the course of his after-life. It seemed to Edmund that his pious, holy mother was in his room, pointing with outstretched hand to some geometrical figures before him, while with serious look and tone she bade him study the Adorable Trinity rather than aught else. It was but a dream, yet it made so deep an impression upon the mind of the student that it decided him upon

beginning his preparation for the life of a priest.

After his ordination, S. Edmund began to preach with great zeal, and returning to England he travelled through Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, and Worcestershire, striving to bring men to repent of sin and turn with love to God their Creator.

It was not long before the sovereign Pontiff sent him to preach a crusade against the Saracens, for which he was to receive some offering towards his maintenance, but S. Edmund would take nothing, glad only to execute the command without receiving for it any pecuniary reward.

People of all classes were soon moved by his earnest preaching to amend their lives, and one among these was William Longspear, the far-famed Earl of Salisbury, who had long neglected the Sacraments, but was so thoroughly converted by one of S. Edmund's sermons that he began from that moment to make the salvation of his soul his chief concern.

One day as he preached in a large open space near the church at Worcester, a shower began to fall, but the Saint bade the people remain as they were, promising that not a drop of rain should descend on the spot where they stood, which promise was, by the power of God, fulfilled.

Prayer, mortification, humility; these were the three great practices he enjoined upon his hearers, but he bid them not attach undue importance to the *length* of their prayers.

“I would rather say five words with my heart devoutly, than five thousand which my soul does not relish with affection and with understanding,” he was wont to exclaim when seeking to impress upon his hearers the necessity of fervent prayer.

The See of Canterbury had been vacant some time when Edmund Rich was appointed to fill it. On hearing these tidings he was very much cast down, nor would he have accepted the dignity had not obedience required it.

While Archbishop, S. Edmund maintained a very simple mode of life, making his chief employment the temporal and spiritual necessities of those committed to his care.

He practised great mortification of his own appetite, but being more severe to himself than to others, he never failed to provide suitably for the members of his household.

Those were times when many corruptions had crept into Christ's Church, even extending to the clergy, and the devout Archbishop set himself to combat the evil, and restore the true spirit of the Faith in those who professed it. While courageous and resolute, he was still gentle, and yet he met with great opposition from those whose duty was to support the measures he pointed out. Many, once his closest friends, now turned against him, many spoke bitterly and falsely of his actions, but amidst the storm of adverse opinion his peace of heart remained firmly established, nay, he could even, by God's grace, say that "tribulations were the nourishment of his soul."

The Saint always had in his company a Dominican friar noted for piety and learning, and it is from one of these holy men we learn how constantly S. Edmund was found in marvellous states of ecstasy.

The storm rose higher, the difficulties of the Church became still more perplexing. Henry III. not only appropriated the ecclesiastical revenues to his own use, but gave bishoprics and other benefices to persons wholly unfitted for the duties such a position involved. Unable to stay these abuses which were desolating the Church, S. Edmund made his protest against the evil in the only manner now possible to him; he quitted the country and passed over to France, and retiring to Pontigny, gave himself up to prayer and penance. His ill health, however, led the physicians to prescribe a change of air, so that he went to Soissy. The monks wept at losing him, on seeing which he bade them be consoled, adding that he should return by the feast of S. Edmund the Martyr. It was true, although

they did not then understand that he meant his body would then be taken back to them after his death.

But the holy man felt no increase of health when he arrived at Soissy, and so certain was he of the near approach of death that he begged to receive Viaticum. When the Blessed Sacrament was brought, he exclaimed:

"In Thee, O Lord, I have believed. Thee I have preached and taught. Thou art my witness that I have desired nothing on earth, but Thee alone."

Upon the following day he received Extreme Unction, and from that time he never allowed the crucifix to be taken from his hands, saluting it frequently with great devotion.

At length, without any apparent pain or struggle, he expired, upon the 16th November, 1242. His body was conveyed to Pontigny, and after seven days was deposited in a tomb there, many miraculous cures following.

In 1246 the Saint was canonised, and in

1247 his remains were translated in the presence of King Louis of France, Queen Blanche, and a large number of prelates. Visitors to Pontigny are permitted to see S. Edmund's pastoral ring and staff, which are carefully preserved there.





S. Richard, Bishop and Confessor.

A.D. 1253.

AT the town of Wyche, situated some four miles from Worcester, Richard, afterwards the sainted Bishop and Confessor of the Church, was born of a pious and honourable family. From his earliest years he showed great taste for study, and in due course distinguished himself at Oxford and afterwards at Paris, and at Bologna was made Doctor of Canon Law.

Upon his return to England, Richard was elected Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and when his abilities became known to S. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, he made him Chancellor over his diocese and his own intimate friend.

Time passed, and S. Edmund died in France, upon which Richard gave up all secular pursuits, and repairing to one of the houses of the Friars Preachers, began there his theological course, and was ordained a priest.

In the year 1245, there was an election of a Bishop for the diocese of Chichester, and one was chosen so unfitted for the post that Boniface, Archbishop of Canterbury, refused his consent to the arrangement, and therefore Richard de Wyche was chosen instead.

The King was indignant, but S. Richard accepted the office, and appealed to Pope Innocent IV. for his confirmation of the election, and from the hands of the Pontiff received consecration.

This done, S. Richard returned to England bringing with him letters from the Holy Father to the King, enjoining upon him the duty of submitting to this decision.

But Henry grew more than ever angry, and a great many of the courtiers began to side with him, even some also among the clergy.

So the revenues of the good Bishop being confiscated, he was often reduced to great straits, and if he went to Windsor to beg the King to give him what was his due, the royal servants treated him with the most insolent scorn.

There was but one person of rank who dared risk the anger of the sovereign by showing any kindness to S. Richard, and this was a gentleman in the diocese of Chichester named Symon de Tefinge, who received the much-persecuted Bishop into his own house and treated him with every mark of respect.

S. Richard then began to visit his people, travelling about from one town to another, preaching with great power and administering the Sacraments. For two years he continued thus patiently bearing the wrongs heaped upon him, doing his duty meanwhile faithfully and well, and at last this Christian conduct had its effect upon the King, who began to repent of what he had done, and at length restored the Bishop his manors.

In the year 1253, S. Richard was engaged in preaching a crusade against the Saracens, moving about the south of England. Upon Mid-Lent Sunday he consecrated a church at Dover dedicated to S. Edmund of Canterbury, attached to which there was a hospital and also a cemetery for the poor.

In the sermon which he preached, the holy Bishop told his hearers that his end was not far distant, and he commended himself very earnestly to their prayers.

Upon the following day when singing Office, he suddenly fainted, and was carried to his bed; but instead of rallying as every one expected, his strength declined so rapidly that it was thought necessary for him to receive the last sacraments of the Church.

As he lay suffering, his friend Symon de Teringe came to visit him, and spoke of the approaching Passion-tide.

"Friday will be a joyous day for me," replied the Saint.

Very often he would embrace the crucifix

with loving fervour, kissing the marks of the five Sacred Wounds as he exclaimed:

"I thank Thee, O my Lord, for all the benefits Thou hast conferred upon me, and for the sufferings and shame which Thou didst bear for me, and which forced Thee to cry out, 'Is there any sorrow like unto My sorrow ?'"

It was upon the 3rd April in the year 1253, that S. Richard departed this life, amidst the tears and prayers of those who had gathered round to witness his holy end. He had reached the ninth year of his episcopate, and the fifty-seventh year of his age.

For some days his body was exposed for veneration, and those who had assisted in preparing it for burial were much affected by seeing upon it the traces of the severe penance with which he had punished himself.

The remains of S. Richard were interred by the altar he had erected to S. Edmund in the Cathedral of Chichester, but in the year 1216 were translated to a place of higher honour.



S. Colette.

A.D. 1447.

GOWARDS the close of the fourteenth century, a child was born in Picardy whose parents, out of a special devotion to S. Nicholas, named her Colette.

We hear that as she passed from infancy to childhood, the little girl had a sweet face and a most engaging manner; but even more noticeable than her beauty was her modesty, and as with downcast eyes and serious face she went through the streets of her native town with her missal in her hand, she looked like one of the paintings of the Blessed Virgin.

When Colette knelt in some corner of the

large church absorbed in prayer, many who saw her would say that she reminded them more of some pure angel than a creature of this world.

So many personal attractions would have led some young girls to love the pleasures of society, but not so with the future Saint. Solitude was ever dear to her, the country far more delightful than the bustle of a court, while the most splendid tournament could not compare in her estimation with the grand ceremonies of the Church.

Did any one speak to Colette of some gay procession or brilliant entertainment, she in return had to tell of some religious festival she had taken part in, or some First Communion she had witnessed, when children and parents were together offering their prayers to Heaven.

Perhaps this young girl would not have been able to close her heart so firmly against the seductions of the world if she had not loved so much the reading of books which

filled her mind with pious, holy thoughts. As soon as she was of sufficient age to understand the words, Colette would sit poring for hours over some wonderful old legend, or the story of a martyr's life ; and as she read, some strong though secret voice seemed ever calling her to leave the world and tread a narrower and rougher path than that of earthly satisfaction. In the quiet evening hours Colette loved to get her young companions round her, and then she would persuade them to listen while she read from some spiritual book which might lead them also to see the joy of renouncing all for God.

She would also go into the homes of poverty and misery, nor did she shrink from the most sinful and debased, and while giving temporal help she tried to speak of higher things, but always so gently and wisely that she gained the love and the blessing of the poor.

Thus the earliest years of life passed by until Colette was eighteen, and then there rose up in her heart a great dread and a great

hatred of her own beauty. It seemed to her so terrible a thing to win the admiration of creatures, to be the means perhaps of diverting even one soul from the thought and the love of God, that she resolved to destroy the charm of her own appearance, and to effect this she began a series of severe mortifications which should attenuate her graceful form, and rob her cheek of its lovely hue.

She fasted, she scourged herself, she spent long nights in watching, and as her mirror showed her the trace which penance left upon her natural beauty, she rejoiced. Longing to become more and more conformed to the example of the blessed ones of whom her books told her, the holy girl rejected all ornaments, all lace and silken attire; and when at length the time came that she could pass through a crowded street unadmired and even unobserved, she thanked God as one who had gained a victory. Once, the eyes of all men rested upon her sweet fair face, so radiantly lovely in its girlish bloom; now, pale, emaciated,

and plainly clad, she might kneel for hours in the church without giving a passing distraction and without attracting a passing thought. "Colette the beautiful" had been her title; now she was a poor, plain, humble maiden, forgotten by those who had regarded only the outward appearance.

It was about this time that the parents of Colette died, leaving a small property behind them. She began immediately to distribute it amongst the poor and suffering, for she was now alone in the world, and the time had come for her to give herself wholly to God's service as she had vowed long before. Her first trial of religion was in the house of a community of Béguines, but the rule was too mild and easy for one familiar with such austere penance, and she did not long remain there, but went next to the Urbanistes, so named by Pope Urban IV. But she did not find what she sought among these religious, and she passed from this to several houses of the Benedictine rule, seeking some Order where

great austerity and continual prayer should be united to a completely hidden obscure life —in fact a living death alone could satisfy Colette.

At length she took the habit of the Third Order of S. Francis ; but no communities had been formed at that time, and women lived where they pleased, some in solitude, some in the world, bound only by their rule and a few simple practices suited to ordinary Christian life.

Having thus associated herself with the spiritual daughters of Francis, Colette obtained leave from the priest and the inhabitants of her native town of Corbie, to dwell in an obscure cottage where she could be entirely secluded from the world.

She had made not only the three ordinary vows of religion, but that also of perpetual enclosure, and now at twenty-three years of age she was forgotten by the world she had never learned to love.

In that peaceful shelter the Saint spent her

time in almost uninterrupted prayer ; with her pale lips pressed upon a crucifix she held sweet communion with her Divine Lord, or knelt before some holy image invoking the aid of His Saints. She rose from her knees to practise some vigorous penance, to scourge herself until her hand dropped powerless by her side, and then the rough hair-shirt would be replaced upon the bleeding shoulder, and the heavy iron chain press upon her wasted form even in her short hours of sleep—that rest upon the hard ground with a stone for a pillow which was all that Colette permitted herself.

And this victim of penance was no long-hardened sinner, not one of those who have fallen away so grievously from God ; it was a young and innocent maiden, whose life had been one continual act of love, who thus sought the most cruel means of torturing her body and offering herself as a holocaust to the Divine Justice.

Without doubt God had called the holy

Colette to a life of singular hardness which He has not appointed for many even of His favoured servants, and her fidelity to His inspirations brought into her soul a continued increase of grace. If we were but faithful in the little things required of us, what an accession of grace would be ours also !

For the space of about three years, Colette remained in solitude at Corbie, and then went to assist in the reform of the Poor Clares. To perform this work she obtained a dispensation from her enclosure, and set forth upon her journey to the presence of the Pope, then Benedict XIII.

The Pontiff received her with paternal goodness, and gave her permission to assume the habit of the Poor Clares with the obligation of keeping their rule in all its strictness. She received also authority to enter those houses of the daughters of S. Francis who felt a desire to return to the spirit of their earliest foundation.

Colette proceeded to Savoy, where her zeal

communicated itself to many other souls, who enlisted under her banner; and the reform extended itself through the provinces of France, until she had the happiness of seeing the primitive rule established.

It seems as if the life of S. Colette was divided into two parts; the one, extreme solitude, the martyrdom of self, the perpetual retreat, the combat with nature; the other, the weary journeying, the bustle of cities, the apostolic life and the combat with the world; but in all things and all places she found God, and His Will was also hers.

In the year 1447 God called to Himself the soul of His faithful servant, leaving her sisters and the poor whom she had befriended to mourn her loss. Her body was interred at Gand, and many miracles were worked there.

Surely when some young heart is beating high with the anticipated pleasures of the world, the story of Colette, so young, so fair, yet choosing the narrow cell, the hard couch,

the solitary life for the love of God, will bring some serious thought, some higher purpose than the pursuit of earthly joys that never can satisfy the soul, which has been created for the Divine glory.





S. Thomas of Villanova.

A.D. 1555.

THERE was joy in the household of a family of Villanova in Castile when, in the year 1488, a son was born to them; there was joy too in many another home, for God had caused the glory of a miracle to shed its radiance around the birth of the little Thomas, and upon the day he came into the world the plague which had been raging suddenly disappeared.

His parents felt that this child was destined to do some special work for God, and therefore they strove to fit him for such service by a careful training in his earliest years. Happily for Thomas, his mother sought God's help in

every duty by fervent prayer, and now each morning saw her carrying her infant son into her oratory, where before an image of Mary Immaculate she consecrated him to God and that Virgin Mother, begging that his heart might be early penetrated with Divine love.

As the child began to observe what passed around him, this wise mother kept strict watch over his attendants so that not a word should be spoken which could injure his innocence, and the first words she taught him were words of prayer.

The little boy needed not to be reminded of holy things, for he delighted in them above all else, and could no sooner walk than he would hide himself in the garden or in some retired corner to pray to God.

Close by the home of this pious family there was a Franciscan convent, the chapel of which was open to the public; and whenever the bell rang for a sermon, the little Thomas was sure to appear first of all the congregation, and his attention to the preacher was wonderful to

see. When it was over he would collect other children together, and mounting on some stone repeat to them what he had heard in the chapel, which he did so well that many older persons loved to listen to him.

He was not very fond of play, unless there was some imitation of some ceremony of the Church, when he would join his young companions with all his heart.

The parents of this boy had long been remarkable for their extreme charity to the poor, and Thomas resembled them in his goodness of heart towards all who were in any need. The sight of a beggar would bring tears to his eyes, and he was ready to deprive himself of food or money if he might thus be permitted to assist the distressed.

Each morning the boy went to school, remaining there till afternoon; but he never could be persuaded to eat his breakfast before starting, and his mother discovered that he was in the habit of taking it with him that he might bestow it on the first beggar he met.

It was not a rare thing to find Thomas returning to his home without his shoes or some other article of dress which he had bestowed upon some poor creature who had asked alms. One day his mother gave him a new suit, which he received unwillingly though in silence. Some hours later he went out, and meeting a child of his own size in very tattered clothing he exchanged garments in some retired corner, returning home with confidence that his mother would not be displeased.

On being questioned he cried, "My good mother, I met a little boy to whom I have given my clothes, and he, as you see, has let me have his. I knew you would forgive me." So pleased was his mother to see the unselfish love of her child's heart that she smiled upon him as she assured him that he had acted rightly.

Thomas displayed also from his early childhood a penitential spirit rare in one so young; fasting was a joy to him, especially as it enabled him to have food to bestow on others, and he

accustomed his tender body to the hair-shirt and discipline at an age when other boys would have no other thought or desire than amusement.

It was a sorrowful moment to the loving parents when they felt compelled to send their son from them to continue his studies at Alcala, in the year 1503, where he remained for about three years.

Little is told of this period of his life, but that little conveys to us the thought of a studious and diligent youth, who preserved his love of prayer and contemplation in the midst of the many temptations and worldly influences which beset every student.

At eighteen years of age Thomas came back to Villanova to visit his parents for a time, but he returned again to the university of Alcala, where he became a professor when his scholarship ended. The position the Saint now occupied seemed as favourable to his piety as to his intellectual pursuits, and yet he was not satisfied. He felt a great attraction to religious

life, and yet he desired to be of some Order which was engaged in some direct work for the help of the poor, and was giving his mind to the study of the different communities existing in Spain, when his father's death occurred.

This sad event recalled Thomas to Villanova for the consolation of his mother, and that he might carry out the wishes of the departed one; and it was then he decided to give up the house now his own for a hospital, a good work in which his mother assisted by furnishing it, and supplying linen necessary for use.

It was at this time that S. Thomas received the offer of a high position in the college at Salamanca, but he declined it, feeling sure that God called him to a religious life, and in November, 1526, he entered an Augustinian convent in the city.

The day upon which his clothing took place was passed in the most profound recollection, and was a day he ever recalled with joy and gratitude to God.

He regarded the beginning of his novitiate as the beginning of his true conversion to God, and he applied himself especially to the exercise of prayer, humility, and abstinence.

In 1517 he pronounced his final vows, and spent the next year in preparing himself for the priestly office.

During his life in the community at Salamanca, his excessive love of penance could only be restrained by the perfect obedience which he practised.

It was upon the feast of Christmas that he said his first Mass, with a love and fervour indescribable—such a heavenly peace shown upon his face, such tears of joy streamed from his eyes, that all who beheld him felt their hearts profoundly moved by the spectacle of his devotion.

It was not long before S. Thomas was made Prior of the monastery of Salamanca, and afterwards Provincial—in every office he acted with a wisdom and charity which edified all with whom he had to deal.

Wonderful success attended the preaching of this servant of God, and when a sermon from him was expected the church would be crowded long before the appointed hour.

It was thus that a great change was brought about in the city of Salamanca. During Lent the amusements in which the people had been in the habit of indulging were given up, the churches were frequented, and the inhabitants of the city attended to their religious duties with great regularity.

It was among the young that S. Thomas did a very great and special work, and under his teaching the students of the university gained the esteem of every one by their piety of life and good example.

Much might we say of the career of S. Thomas as a priest, as a missionary, and also as a bishop; but our story would be too long if we gave the details of his holy actions, the favours God awarded him, and the work he was permitted to accomplish in the souls of others.

As charity to the poor was one of the distinguishing virtues of his life, we may select some few examples before looking at the close of his earthly labours.

A weaver fell ill, and meanwhile his wife and children were reduced to great distress. S. Thomas, hearing of this, sent for the man and asked him what sum he owed to set him up again. With some hesitation the weaver said it would take a hundred ducats. But the good Bishop did not hesitate ; sending for his treasurer he had the money given into the hands of the grateful man, whom he hurried away that he might escape his heartfelt thanks.

There was a woman who after her husband's death found it hard work to live and support her six children, and the holy S. Thomas, knowing of her difficulty, asked if she had thought of any way in which she could comfortably maintain herself. The widow answered that her father had been a miller, and she therefore knew how to grind flour and bake bread. The good Bishop said little, but

went home, and soon after the poor woman's heart was made glad by the present of a donkey, some flour, kneading troughs, and all else she needed to carry on her trade.

S. Thomas felt a great interest in young people who were marrying and beginning life. A story showing his kindness in such a case is told much after this fashion.

A tailor of Valencia had received an order to make some article of clothing for the Bishop, and knowing his customer had the character of being very liberal, this man put on an extra charge for his work, believing that a few shillings more than the proper price would escape notice.

Not so, however. The good Bishop was charitable, but he would not permit an imposition, and he refused to pay the money, thereby making the tailor furiously angry, and he declared to his neighbours that S. Thomas was just as stingy as anybody else.

Some time after this same man was greatly troubled; trade was bad with him, and for want

of a respectable dowry he could not marry his three daughters.

Every one bade him go for help to the Archbishop, and at last he braved the difficulty and went. He was received most kindly, with the promise that if he returned upon the following day with his parish priest, twenty pounds for each of his daughters should be given him.

When the time came, instead of twenty pounds he received double, and when in shame for his past complaining he threw himself at the Archbishop's feet, he was raised with great kindness by that fatherly hand.

"Ah!" said the Saint, "you thought me a stingy miser, but I did not care for money; I only wanted it for the poor. God grant that when I die He shall not find me with a penny of my own."

Thus passed the years of S. Thomas of Villanova's life in exercises of piety and charity. At length came to him the glad promise of death.

Kneeling upon the Feast of the Purification before his crucifix, a voice seemed to issue from it, which told him that upon the Festival of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin, he should be called from earth to share in the joys of heaven.

The months passed on, and at the close of August the Saint grew ill; and he understood what was coming, so he made a general confession in preparation for death.

Three days before the Festival the physicians pronounced him better, which was a great consolation to all who loved him; but S. Thomas made use of the remaining time in dispensing his money to the hospitals, and for the maintenance of little orphan children, for whom he had ever felt a great tenderness.

When the day dawned on which he knew his soul would pass into the hands of his Creator, he asked that Holy Mass might be celebrated in his presence; and at the moment of the priest's communion he died, it being the year 1555, the sixty-seventh of his age,

and the eleventh of his dignity as Archbishop.

When the cathedral bells announced the tidings to the people, universal grief prevailed. The shops were closed, and every one felt that a great misfortune had befallen Valencia. Well might they sorrow at the loss of one so holy, so benevolent and so loving a father and friend to the least among his flock ; but in heaven the angels rejoiced, as one more of Christ's faithful servants was admitted into the glorious band of Saints who are gathered around the throne of God for ever.





S. Peter of Alcantara.

A.D. 1562.

WHEN Alexander VI. was ruling over the Church of Christ, and when Ferdinand and Isabella were seated upon the throne of Spain, Don Pedro Garavito, the Governor of the town of Alcantara, had a son born to him who was named Peter.

Both parents were of high birth, and both possessed a piety and virtue far more to be desired than earthly advantages, so that the childhood of Peter was carefully watched over, and holy lessons were implanted which brought forth fruit in his life.

At six years old we find this little boy loving prayer so much that he begged to keep

the key of their domestic chapel, so that he might steal in there and spend long hours before the Blessed Sacrament.

As soon as he learned to read, Peter began to study the Scriptures; and if he met with any passage which he liked much, he would copy it out in a small book which he read over when alone.

He never cared for the ordinary games of children, yet he was beloved by those of his own age, for he was always kind and unselfish towards all.

When he began his school life, Peter delighted his masters by his steady application and abilities, which soon placed him in advance of his companions.

When school closed, he always went into one particular church to prayer, and on one occasion when he was unusually late in returning home, his parents sent to search for him.

It was some time before the servant could succeed in finding him, but at last he was

brought out from the choir behind the organ, where he had been so rapt in prayer that he knew not how time was passing.

Don Pedro died while his son was still a boy, but his mother entered into a second marriage with a gentleman who treated Peter with great affection.

At the age of fourteen the youth went to Salamanca for the further continuance of his studies and here he chose his friends from amongst the most pious men of the city, one of whom he took for his spiritual guide.

By a well-arranged rule of life, Peter managed to spend several hours in prayer before the early Mass in church, after which he had to go to his masters. He would then return to the church again, frequently to receive Holy Communion, and always to pray with great fervour, until noon, when he went home and took a light meal, avoiding the use of wine entirely.

After the afternoon studies he would visit

the hospital, and then spend more time in church.

Every night he recited the *De Profundis* in preparing himself for rest, fixing his mind upon the subject of death.

When the Saint had been at Salamanca a year, his friends wished him to visit them at Alcantara. It was during his stay at home that Peter formed his resolution to give up the studies which might engross his mind too much ; and after a long time given to prayer for Divine guidance, he felt God's voice within him calling him to embrace a religious life.

He did not speak of his plans to his family, for he believed they would seek to dissuade him from so strict a service of God ; but after hearing Holy Mass and communicating he started one morning on a journey to Valentia, on his way to the Franciscan convent of Mau-garez, the warden of which house having given him permission to go there.

All day Peter journeyed on without taking any food ; it seemed that after partaking of the

Body and Blood of Christ in the morning he needed nothing more to sustain his strength. At evening time he reached the banks of the river Tietur, but there was no one there to ferry him over, and therefore no means of crossing. Raising his heart to God for direction in his perplexity, it was but a moment before our young Saint found himself transported miraculously to the other side of the river, and upon the high-road leading to the monastery. His heart was full of gratitude to God for this help, and long years after he would speak of that event as the beginning of the many favours granted him from Heaven.

On reaching the Franciscan house, Peter begged to receive the habit; but to try his constancy it was not then given, although he was invited to remain upon a few days' visit. The days became weeks and still Peter lingered there, giving such edification to the community that the wish of his heart was granted, and he was clothed, although only in his sixteenth year.

From the beginning of his novitiate S. Peter evinced a great desire and love of penance.

He joyfully wore the most ragged habit he could obtain, and took his rest at night upon a board with only a thin coverlet over him, however cold it might be. His superiors gave him great trials and humiliations, but to this fervent novice they were the cause of joy. Even then he had learned to feel what in later days he would say to others : "There is not a shorter or surer way to perfection than to suffer for Jesus Christ, Who is our sovereign Good ; and although that way be narrow and difficult, it leads to heaven in the end."

When the year of his novitiate was over, Peter was permitted to make his profession ; and even then many of the brethren had begun to look upon him as a saint, though he, in his deep humility, believed himself the most sinful among their number.

Some years passed by, and then Peter was sent to the convent of S. Francis at Belnio, where he built for himself two little cells, in

which he could more freely give himself to prayer and penance.

It was now one of his duties to go out soliciting alms, and in this occupation his recollection was wonderful, and his discretion so great that even the most censorious could say nothing against him.

It was impossible for his virtues to remain hidden, for it seemed God's purpose to make them shine brightly before the eyes of men.

Sometimes in the open country his body would be raised many feet in the air while he was rapt in contemplation, but when the ecstasy passed he quietly went on begging, or would hurry away in confusion if he discovered that any one had observed him.

In the year 1524, being then twenty-five years of age, Peter was told to prepare himself for his ordination to the priesthood, after which he was specially employed in preaching, as his superiors found he had a great talent for it.

A year later, the Saint was made warden of

the monastery of Our Lady of Angels, situated some three miles from Roberdillo.

His sorrow at being given such an office was moderated when he saw the lonely spot in which he was to dwell—a deep and silent valley surrounded by the lofty mountains. While in this retreat it happened, a few days before the Festival of Christmas, that the monastery was completely snowed up, so that none of the brethren could go out to seek alms. The only refreshment they partook of that day was spiritually in a sermon of the holy Peter on the poverty of which our Blessed Lord submitted himself when on earth, and so night came and Matins were recited. Just before Mass the bell at the gate rang, and when the porter opened it he saw, not the poor shepherd in search of shelter as he had expected, but two baskets standing there, one filled with meat and the other with fine white bread.

The Saint knew the supply had come from Heaven, but he sent some of the friars to see if

they could trace their benefactor, while he himself made thanksgiving.

Not being able to find a foot-mark upon the snow, the brethren returned full of joy that God had thus miraculously supplied their wants; and when at dinner-time they partook of the food, its delicious flavour alone was proof that it had been the gift of Heaven.

The great work of the Saint of Alcantara was the foundation of religious houses, in which the rule was kept with greater strictness, and therefore termed "reformed;" and the first of these monasteries was built near the town of Pedrosa, after many difficulties and objections had been overcome. The friars here kept the primitive rule of S. Francis with simplicity, yet strictness, and after a time the reform spread to other parts of Spain.

While the Saint was making a short sojourn at Pedrosa after convoking his first chapter, God revealed to him in prayer the great sufferings of the holy S. Teresa at Avila, and he was inspired to visit the city.

At that time Teresa was in the convent of the Incarnation, and all men were doubting and mistrusting her, even such as were filled with knowledge and the love of God. When Peter of Alcantara reached the gates of Avila a most brilliant comet was observed in the heavens, nor could it be accounted for until it was known that the Saint had arrived, upon which the people ran to welcome him and to beg his benediction. This comet continued to shine during the week he remained at Avila.

Not only did S. Peter give great consolation to S. Teresa when she discovered to him the operation of Divine Grace in her soul, but he proved to her directors, and in particular to Father Balthazar Alvarez, that she was led by the spirit of Christ, and disabused many persons of the wrong opinion they held regarding her. This done, he prepared to quit Avila; but during the remainder of his life he bestowed much help and care upon S. Teresa, and assisted her most actively in pro-

moting the reform of her own Order of Mount Carmel.

The miraculous favours of God were showered upon the Saint of Alcantara so profusely that it is difficult to make choice of those examples which shall be related in a brief sketch of his life.

Upon one occasion, when journeying, the darkness of night overtook him upon the banks of the Tagus, the waters of which were then greatly swollen. At this moment God caused a brilliant light to appear upon the opposite side of the river, to which Peter made his way as if he had been walking on dry ground, nor did he hear the roar of the waters or see the river on which he trod. It happened once that the country was burnt up by a drought which dried up the grain and left no pasture for the cattle, nor did the prayers of the people obtain the much-desired rain.

They then besought the Saint of Alcantara to intercede for them, to which he agreed, only

requesting that they should join in procession with his monks, assembling in the church for that purpose.

When they were gathered together, the holy man discoursed to them upon their sins which merited the punishment of God, at which many were moved to tears. When he finished speaking he knelt for a moment in prayer before the altar, and rising again assured the people that their petitions would speedily be granted; and truly, as the procession began thick clouds were seen obscuring the burning rays of the sun, and presently the rain descended abundantly, lasting several days until the earth was completely soaked.

At another time a poor woman almost blind came to the Saint, begging him to intercede with God for her, as she could not without sight gain her livelihood.

"May God cure you," said the holy man, laying his hand upon her head, and immediately the woman opened her eyes and saw clearly and well.

At length S. Peter began to feel that he should soon be taken from earth, and he therefore visited his different monasteries, that he might stir up their fervour and encourage them in the rigours of the reform.

While staying at one of these he became alarmingly ill, and was removed, at the earnest prayer of a pious nobleman, to his own house, which was nearer the monastery of Arenas where the Saint desired to be buried.

On reaching the Count's abode, S. Peter was placed upon a very comfortable bed, but he would not lie in it, and they were forced to prepare him a poor rough couch in the corner of the room.

His sufferings were terrible, and besides his pains of body, God permitted that His servant should be tried by the assaults of the Evil One, yet he continually exclaimed : "Blessed be the holy Name of God."

As soon as a slight rally took place the Saint was removed to the monastery of Arenas, where he lay for several days until the warden

sent him to the infirmary in the town, where he would receive better attention.

There he was visited by many persons of all ranks who desired his benediction, and who prayed earnestly that his life might be spared, but such was not the Will of God.

Feeling his end draw near, the blessed man begged that the prayers of the Church might be recited for his departing soul, and then he calmly awaited the coming of death.

As he lay upon his bed in deep meditation, a vision was granted him of the Blessed Virgin and S. John, which animated him with such fervour that he raised himself and, kneeling, began to pray aloud, and recited the Psalm, "I cried to the Lord with my voice, with my voice I made supplication to Him."

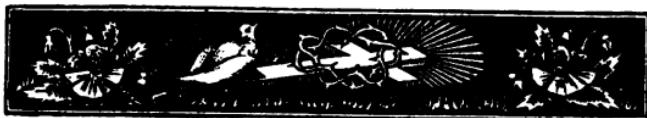
Shortly after he gently breathed his last, upon Sunday, October 18, 1562, at the age of sixty-three years.

A vision was granted S. Teresa, who, at the time S. Peter Alcantara died, saw him enter

her cell so surrounded with glory that words failed her in which to describe it.

“ What is this, my Father ? ” she exclaimed, and the Saint replied :
“ I am going to eternal repose.”





S. Camillus of Lellis.

A.D. 1614.

CT was the 25th of May, 1550, and in the principal church of one of the towns of the province of Abruzzo, the festival of S. Urban Pope and Martyr was being celebrated with great rejoicings. A woman considerably advanced in years had gone that day to be present at the Holy Sacrifice, to pray for the child which God had promised to her in her age, even as to S Elizabeth of old, and but a few hours later the birth took place of Camillus, who was to bring honour and blessing to his country and his people.

According to the custom of persons in their

Being thus thwarted in his project, Camillus soon forgot it for a time, and went to Rome hoping there to be cured of the wound in his leg. Upon hearing of the great skill of the surgeons of the hospital of S. Giacomo, he placed himself there for many months in the capacity of a servant, that he might receive their care; but he was sent away before the cure was completed on account of his violent temper, and that passion for gambling which had betrayed itself in the days of his childhood.

After this, Camillus went to serve the Venetian republic, passing through many dangers of different kinds; but it was not until the autumn of the year 1574 that he thought again of his vow. It happened that he was sailing from Palermo to Naples, when so terrible a storm arose that all on board gave themselves up for lost; and then Camillus, in his fear, renewed that promise to Almighty God of taking the habit of S. Francis.

The storm abated, and the ship's company

landed safely at Naples, where the crew were discharged, and Camillus was thus freed from military service, but from his losses in gambling he was now so poor that he had scarcely clothes to his back.

Thus beggared, he determined to seek his fortune in travelling with another soldier for a companion, but reaching Manfredonia he was compelled to ask alms at the door of the great church like other distressed persons.

His face burned with shame as he stood there, but one man of noble birth passed by and offered him employment as labourer at the new buildings the Capuchin Fathers had then in hand.

Camillus replied that he would ask the consent of his companion, but finding Tiberio averse to the thought of such work, he set off without thanking his benefactor in the direction of Barletta.

Scarcely had he left the city than the thought came, that perhaps God had put the

employment in his way as a help towards the fulfilment of his vow, but not liking to leave his friend he walked on twelve miles of the journey. But he could not feel any rest of mind, and at length began to speak of returning to Manfredonia to accept the offered employment. Tiberio still refused to have anything to do with it, and in the end they parted company, and Camillus, returning whence he came, sought out Signor Antonio, who took him to the overseer of works.

The charge Camillus received was to take two asses to and fro with the necessary stone, lime, and water—an employment so little to his taste and so humiliating that more than once he would have abandoned it had not the good Fathers persuaded him to a longer trial.

His former companion, Tiberio, returned, and began also to labour, but soon growing weary used every argument to persuade Camillus to depart. The children of the town, too, laughed at him in his poor clothing, but the

charity and kindness of the Fathers prevented him being wholly overcome by either temptation.

Still Camillus forgot, or thought but lightly of his vow, and felt such repugnance to the life of a religious that he even refused for a long time the clothing offered him lest they should in the end give him a friar's habit. His intention was to remain until he had gained sufficient to recommence his gambling or take up once more a soldier's life, but God had other designs for him.

Some wine had been bestowed as alms upon the convent, and Camillus was commissioned to go to Castello and pack it. Having finished this task he was leaving for Manfredonia again, when the Father Guardian of the Capuchins at Castello took him aside and spoke so earnestly of a change of life and a complete turning from sin that Camillus felt his heart greatly moved.

As he journeyed to Manfredonia he could not refrain from thinking of the good Father's words, and suddenly a ray of heavenly light

seemed to penetrate his soul, revealing its miserable condition and awakening him to a deep sorrow for his many sins.

Overcome with fear and remorse, Camillus dismounted, and kneeling down by the roadside cried with fast-falling tears :

“ Wretch that I am ! Why have I not known my Lord ? why have I been deaf to His voice ? Better would it have been that I had not been born ; yet Lord forgive me, a most grievous sinner, and give me time to do true penance.”

So humbled and so ashamed was the now penitent man, that he dared not lift his eyes to heaven, nor would he rise until he had thanked God for so long bearing with him, promising, by the help of His grace, to offend no more.

He then renewed his vow to enroll himself as soon as possible among the Capuchins, and as he went on his journey kept saying to himself, “ No more of the world, no more of the world.”

It happened that the day was the 2nd February, the Feast of the Purification, and never from that time was he guilty of mortal sin, but could celebrate each anniversary of the festival as the happy day of his real conversion to God.

On reaching Manfredonia, Camillus knelt before the Father Guardian, and with many tears related what had happened to him, begging to receive the habit and promising himself as the slave and servant of the brethren.

Being assured that so great a change could only be the work of God, the Father strove to comfort him and promised shortly to bestow the habit upon him. Camillus that day began to frequent the sacraments and to practise great penance, while he shed many tears as he reflected upon his evil course and God's long-suffering patience.

He joyfully performed the most menial offices in the convent, and spent the rest of his time in prayer and spiritual exercises, so that

when Father Montefiore arrived, from whom Camillus was to receive the habit, such a favourable account was given that he was made a choir-novice.

The novitiate was to be made at Trivento, and in his journey there God's providence watched over him and shielded him from danger, for as he was about to ford a river in the dusky light of evening a voice from the mountain-top cried three times : "Do not go over," and he instantly turned back, though he could not discover who had given him the warning.

Next morning Camillus met with some Capuchins on their way to Trivento, who told him that the place he had attempted to cross was the most dangerous part of the river, in which he would most surely have been drowned had not God and his angel-guardian watched over him.

After he reached Trivento, being anxious to serve God in the way of humiliation, Camillus chose rather to be a lay-brother than to aspire

to the priesthood, but to the great sorrow of the religious the wound in his ankle became so serious that he had to be dismissed altogether, with the promise, however, of being again received should his health improve.

Hoping to be cured at Rome, Camillus directed his way there, wishing also to gain the indulgences and the jubilee of the year 1571. For his spiritual guide he made choice of the great S. Philip Neri, and under his care advanced in piety and virtue. The wound was now healed, so Camillus wished to return to the Capuchins, though S. Philip predicted that he would not be able to remain. Being once more received into the Order he remained for four months in perfect health, giving great edification to the community, but at the end of that time the continual chafing of the habit brought back the wound upon his ankle, and he was obliged to take a final leave.

Thus did God make clear His purpose that Camillus should not serve Him in a cloistered life. He therefore desired to be employed in

nursing the sick, and upon going to Rome was made superintendent of the hospital of S. Giacomo.

Free now from any uneasiness regarding his vow, Camillus turned his mind entirely towards the duties of his new life, using every means to inspire his assistants with great tenderness and charity for the sufferers with whom they had to deal.

One evening the thought came to him that it would be for God's glory if he could found a congregation of men who would perform their deeds of charity, not for reward, but for the love of Christ; this inspiration from heaven was the origin of the Order of Clerks Regular with which his name is always connected.

After overcoming the first difficulties which beset every new undertaking, Camillus was ordained priest and set to work, beginning his congregation in the little church of the Madonna near the Porta del Popolo. At first there were but three members who began to attend the hospital of S. Spirito every day,

according to some simple rules laid down by Camillus. It was not long before the holy man was stricken down with severe illness, occasioned by great fatigue and poor living; but Camillus found consolation in thinking that his suffering was a favour from God which was intended to make him more compassionate towards the sick and more zealous in attending on them.

As the neighbourhood of the Tiber was evidently unhealthy, Camillus upon his recovery removed to a more suitable part of the city, though still the congregation numbered but three, yet in course of time they increased considerably and called themselves by the name of "Ministers to the sick." Passing over the details of his work, his trials, his successes and his foundations in other cities, we must look at some few of the many wonderful proofs of God's favour which occurred to him during his life.

Upon one occasion when sailing with some professed Fathers and novices from Messina to

Naples, a furious storm arose ; men were blown from the deck into the sea, and all on board in terror called upon Camillus to deliver them.

"Fear not," he said, calmly smiling ; "come below to pray."

Following him to the captain's cabin they knelt down, and after making some of them cut short their flowing hair as an act of penance wherewith to appease the anger of God, Camillus recited the Litanies aloud, and then continued to beseech for help in silence.

While he knelt with eyes raised to heaven, a cry was heard from the few who had remained on deck, "A miracle ! a miracle ! the danger is over ;" and truly enough the angry waves were calm, the wind abated, and captain and crew threw themselves at the feet of the Saint in gratitude.

There were times when Camillus knew not where to obtain either food or money to provide for the wants of those depending on him, and upon one such occasion he turned to the crucifix, exclaiming :

"O Lord, Thou canst have mercy on Thy poor family."

No sooner had he said these words than the bell rang, and an unknown man asked for Camillus, saying :

"Father, are you in want of money ?"

"Blessed be God," replied the Saint; "I am in the greatest possible distress."

"How much do you want ?" was the next question, and upon Camillus saying he needed three hundred scudi, the money was given him, and the stranger disappeared as suddenly as he had arrived.

One morning the Saint brought home two poor men to whom he bade the cook give some soup, and afterwards to take a basinful to those who were waiting at the gate. When the cook went to count them, he found so many that should he feed all, nothing would be left for the community.

"Do you distrust God's goodness ?" cried Camillus, when the difficulty was told him, and forthwith both soup and wine were freely distributed among the poor creatures.

Dinner-time approached—there was no soup and but little meat and bread remaining; but as the sub-minister saw Camillus in prayer with his arms extended in the form of a cross, he rang the bell as usual, believing that all would be well. Nor was this confidence misplaced, for the cook found the copper full of soup, and immediately cried out that God had wrought a miracle at the prayer of His servant Camillus.

Many such illustrations of the faith of the Saint and the divine favours accorded him might be given.

At length, however, Camillus felt that his life-work was almost done, and after a fervent discourse, one day he cried:

“O my native land, remember what I have taught thee, for we shall never see each other more.”

He was then about starting for Naples, and turning to one who stood by as he mounted his horse, he said:

“Bernadine, I am going to Rome, and I shall

die in that holy city. Take care to live as a Christian and in the grace of God, otherwise hell is prepared for you."

After visiting Naples he went to Genoa, where he became very ill. Growing worse, he pursued his journey to Rome, as he had a great desire that his body might rest in the great city of saints and martyrs.

Arriving at Rome, the religious there ran to kiss his hand, and to them he said joyfully :

"I am come to leave my bones here."

It was then the month of October in the year 1613, and from that time till the following July he remained ill and suffering, yet always resigned and happy.

Upon the 11th July the Saint received Extreme Unction, but lingered till the 14th, when he breathed his last calmly and joyfully at the age of sixty-five years.

Many a time during those last four days he turned to his crucifix exclaiming : "O Lord, I recommend to Thee my soul which Thou hast purchased with Thy precious Blood."

Camillus had always felt a peculiar devotion to that precious Blood, and was in the habit of ejaculating, "Lord, Thy Blood must save me," for in his deep humility he attributed no merit to any of his good works.

At his death there were sixteen houses of his Order in Italy, the members of which seemed to have caught the spirit of ardent charity which burned so brightly in their holy founder.

The solemn canonisation of S. Camillus was celebrated in the year 1746, upon the Feast of S.S. Peter and Paul, with great pomp, and amidst the rejoicing of Catholics from all parts of the world.





S. Joseph Calasancius.

A.D. 1641.

ON the 11th September, 1556, Don Pietro Calasancius and his wife Donna Maria, received from God the gift of a little son to train for His glory and service.

They named the child Joseph, and during his early infancy taught him to lisp some simple prayers which he learned quickly and eagerly, reciting of his own accord the rosary daily while he was little more than a baby.

He seemed to take an unusual delight in spiritual things, and having once heard that the devil was the enemy of God, he ran through every room of his father's house in search of

this terrible being, whom in his simplicity he thought he could destroy.

Nor did this desire to slay the enemy of souls leave the little Joseph after that first search for him. We read that once when he was five years old he slipped quietly out into the street armed with a toy sword, and begged all the children he saw to go with him to seek the devil, that they might drive him quite out of the world.

As the boy grew older his father decided to send him to pursue his studies at Estadilla, where we find his life made up of alternate practices of devotion and application to his duties as a scholar. He had a special love for the Blessed Sacrament, never wearying of praying before It; he delighted also in hearing sermons, assisting at catechism, and never allowed a day to pass without reciting the Office of Our Lady.

When the time came for his first Communion, Joseph applied himself with greater fervour to prayer and spiritual exercises, and

from that time received the Adorable Sacra-
ment upon every great festival, if so permitted
by his confessor.

The piety of this youth could not pass un-
observed among a large number of fellow-
students, but the idle and irreligious, who are
to be found in every school, began to dislike
him because his mode of life was a silent con-
demnation of their own course. These had
recourse to constant petty persecution in the
shape of mockery and scornful words and
looks, and they strove to make others with-
draw from his company. Joseph was not
insensible to pain at such conduct, but he
bravely endured it, and maintained his own
course so steadfastly that many who had been
among his enemies became his firm and faith-
ful friends.

At fifteen years of age he had given proofs
of great talent, and had written both prose and
poetry in Spanish and in Latin. His father,
Don Pietro, now felt it time for Joseph to re-
turn to Petralta that he might prepare himself

for military service and maintain the glory which the name of Calasanctius had already won for deeds of daring and of skill.

But the youth had far different desires. He too longed to be a soldier, but a soldier of the Cross, and so effectual were his entreaties that he at last won his father's consent to pursue his studies at the university of Lerida.

On arriving there, Joseph sought for a priest to guide him well in his spiritual life, and for his studies he placed himself under the special protection of S. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin.

As a little child he had been strongly attracted to a life of penance, and now he pursued mortifications with eagerness, eating but once in the day and then sparingly, sleeping upon the hard floor, and using frequent disciplines wherewith to conquer nature.

We find that great innocence and great penance go hand in hand, and thus this pure and holy youth felt a charm in austerities which would have been terrifying to those

whose lives had in them so many more and deeper sins to regret.

While in the university, the youths of Aragon chose Joseph to be their prince, but this honour gave him no delight, excepting that it was perhaps a means of greater power to influence others for good.

One very thoughtless student, who was always involved in some quarrel or trouble, used to come to the young Calasancius in his times of disgrace as to some good friend, and after a time the influence exerted over him completely changed his nature.

Don Pedro, hearing of his son's high reputation, grieved no more that he had chosen the career of a student, and consented to his receiving the tonsure in the month of April, 1575. But Joseph wished to feel himself yet more closely and irrevocably given to the most perfect state, and therefore bound himself by the vow of chastity before the altar of the Blessed Virgin.

The following year he passed from Lerida to

Valencia for his theological studies, and here a great trouble befell him.

Several relations and friends of his family resided in the city whom the young Calasancius was obliged occasionally to visit, and among these was a lady who most unfortunately conceived a strong affection for him. When he discovered it, Joseph was greatly distressed, and repairing to a neighbouring church made a renewal of his vow, beseeching Our Lord to keep him ever chaste and pure of heart; then quitting Valencia upon the plea of pursuing his studies more suitably, he repaired to Alcala in Castillo.

Arrived there, he began to penance himself severely, for in his humility he believed there had been some want of watchfulness on his own part in attracting the regard of the lady who had caused him this distress.

While residing at Alcala, Calasancius became acquainted with Don Ascanio Colonna, and a strong and lasting friendship was the result. Two great family sorrows now oc-

curred—the death of his eldest brother Pietro, followed by that of his much-loved mother.

The grief which Joseph naturally felt was increased by the desire his father expressed to have him home, and also that he would enter the state of marriage. In the sad desolation which had come upon Don Pedro, the affectionate son feared to pain him by speaking of the vow by which he had bound himself irrevocably to love God only, but he escaped from the difficulty by representing the necessity for completing his theological studies, and thus he overcame his father's objections.

But God was about to help Joseph in a way he little expected.

In the year 1582 he was seized with violent illness, which soon placed his life in imminent danger. Don Pedro was alarmed, and the pious son took the opportunity of entreating him to join in offering an oblation to the Most High by permitting him to make a vow of consecrating himself to the priesthood should his life be spared. The agonised father agreed.

Anything seemed easier than to see another son laid in the tomb in the flower of early manhood, so Joseph made his vow and was immediately cured.

¶ It was on the 17th December, 1583, that he was ordained a priest, and while we are told how he shed tears of joy upon first offering the Holy Sacrifice, we hear also that for him every Mass was as the first, for he brought to it the same fervour and devotion of heart.

Although but twenty-eight years of age, this zealous young priest was soon appointed to the office of examiner and regulator of the clergy, and afterwards had to assist in the difficult undertaking of arranging the disorders then rife in the celebrated monastery of Montserrat. Before this business was finally adjusted, Don Pedro Calasanctius fell into ill health, and as soon as he could leave his duty in competent hands, Joseph hastened to Petralta to attend upon his father both as a son and as a priest.

When all was over, and his home was left solitary, he made it a sort of hermitage, never going out unless to fulfil the duties of his office, but spending every spare moment in prayer and contemplation. But this secluded life was not to be long enjoyed, and Joseph was commanded by the Bishop of Urgelle to accept the post of Judge, Visitor, and Vicar-General of Trempe and its district, in which were no less than seventy-two parish churches, and three hundred others scattered about the small towns and villages.

Calasancius could only obey with humility, arming himself with gentle sweetness and good example as a remedy for the abuses it was his duty to correct. Sad as it is to write, it is true that at that time many priests had fallen into a very terrible state of carelessness and sin. They were themselves negligent in approaching the Holy Sacraments, and therefore still more negligent in administering them to others. They gambled and abandoned themselves to a self-indulgent life, which bishops

were striving hard, yet unsuccessfully, to correct.

Perceiving the good effects of the example of the holy Calasanctius in Trempe, the Bishop of Urgelle resolved to employ him in a part of the diocese where these lamentable disorders among the clergy existed, believing that he could heal the wounds which were bringing shame to the Church of Christ.

The holy priest obeyed, and seeing the state of things with which he had to deal, he set himself to prayer and penance that he might appease the anger of God against these sinners. He then began to visit every village and town, he held private conferences with the priests, convincing them of the wrong they had done, and instructing them carefully in their duty, and it was not long before he had the consolation of seeing a different state of things among both clergy and people.

The abundant fruits arising from this visitation of Calasanctius led to his being appointed Vicar-General over the entire diocese, and so

admirably were his duties performed that one short year was sufficient to make Urgelle the wonder and example of the whole of Spain.

While people were commending and praising this holy prelate, his own heart was burdened with the sense of being so much esteemed and honoured, and it seemed as if a voice was always saying to his heart, "Go to Rome." It seemed the more certain that this inspiration came from above because a vision was given him, in which he appeared to be in the city of Rome instructing many children, while angels assisted in this ministry. After consulting his spiritual Father, the Saint determined to renounce his office and benefices, and set sail for Italy in the early part of the year 1592.

On reaching Civita Vecchia, Joseph put on the garb of a pilgrim and made his way to Rome on foot.

It was Lent when he arrived there, and proceeding at once to the church of S. Peter, he made his profession of faith at the tomb of the Apostle. Although the holy man kept himself

from all notice and honour, his arrival became known, and Colonna, now made Cardinal, had instructed his assistant, Compte, to find out where Calasanctius was lodging and bring him without delay to the palace.

Joseph would gladly have refused this honour, but it was not possible, and thus he had to accompany Compte to the presence of the Cardinal, who received him with every mark of regard.

Upon being asked what brought him to Rome, Joseph replied: "I came to do the Will of God."

"Then," rejoined the Cardinal, "the Will of God is that you should remain in my house, where you may practise any exercises of piety you please."

"The Will of God be done," replied Joseph humbly; but he was much pleased to find that his Eminence had chosen for him an apartment adjoining the church of the Holy Apostles. The office of instructing and directing the little Filippo Colonna, great-nephew to the Cardinal, was given him.

Calasancius now drew up a rule for the employment of his time. Towards midnight he rose for prayer and contemplation, which lasted till about the middle of the day, when he took a scanty meal of bread and water. The discipline, the hair-shirt, and such like means of mortification were not omitted, however weary he might be of the day's duties, and he had the spiritual instruction of the Colonna family devolving upon him, in which charge he took extreme delight.

It was at this time that Calasancius heard of a Confraternity established by Pius IV., under the title of the Holy Apostles. It was composed of men of great piety, some of whom were commissioned to seek out in the district allotted to them those who were sick or poor or in any kind of trouble, and to relieve such to the best of their ability. Joseph begged to be enrolled in this Confraternity, and was made one of the visitors.

Soon afterwards this servant of God was made a member of the "Congregation of

Christian Doctrine," which for its object has the instruction of children and grown people in the doctrines of the Faith, a work to which Calasanctius gave himself with the greatest zeal and delight.

If he met poor children or peasants and others idling in the streets, he would stop and give them some short instruction; but it was the openly wicked whom he sought out with the greatest care, and it became almost a proverb that they who fell into his hands were certain to be converted.

In the summer of 1595, Rome was devastated by a malignant disease which overwhelmed the entire city with misery and crowded the hospitals to excess. Calasanctius now gave up all the delights of prayer to the exercise of fraternal charity; from the hospitals he passed to the wretched huts and stables where the poor sufferers lay sick and dying, performing the most repulsive offices for some, administering the Sacraments, assisting those in their agony, and burying the dead. It was God's

goodness alone which preserved his valuable life through the fatigue and danger of that terrible time.

Our Saint had already made one pilgrimage to Assisi, and he repeated it in the summer of 1597. One day while in prayer there, the blessed S. Francis appeared to him in a vision, having in his company three beautiful maidens.

"These are Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, and I am come to espouse thee to them," said the glorious Saint, drawing from his bosom three rings, which Joseph receiving was rapt in a long ecstasy, after which he returned with a joyful heart to Rome.

The heart of God's servant was pierced with grief at seeing so many poor children deprived of Christian instruction, and this was the commencement of the Pious Schools, one of the chief among his many good works for the welfare of souls. Difficulties beset the institution, but at last S. Joseph started his project, and at the end of the first week more than a hundred scholars were being taught free of charge.

Upon the 24th December, 1598, the Tiber overflowed its banks so alarmingly as to inundate Rome, forcing its way through doors and windows and destroying both life and property to a terrible extent. The courageous efforts of S. Calasanzius on this occasion have never been forgotten ; it was he who plunged into the waters to rescue the drowning, he who dragged out dead bodies and secured them Christian burial, he who worked in every possible way which charity could suggest.

The difficulty in writing the story of such a life is that so many circumstances must be passed over which would otherwise instruct and edify ; thus we can say nothing now of his regulations for the Pious Schools, or of many of his sufferings and divine consolations.

Calumny, scorn, injustice, were allowed to try the Saint ; he felt the pressure of debt and anxiety in maintaining the vast number of children and poor depending upon him for support, yet his courage and cheerfulness never failed him, and he had the joy of seeing his

work prospering by the blessing of the Almighty.

Under Pope Gregory XV., the Pious Schools were raised to the rank of a religious Order, of which Joseph Calasancius was elected General for nine years, and foundations were made in other parts.

Many miracles were performed by the Saint among his novices, and many miraculous recoveries from severe illness were also granted him from heaven. We must pass on to the time when a great injury was done to the holy Calasancius by one Mario Lozzi, who, though a priest, was like Judas—a traitor.

By cunning and hypocrisy this man managed to gain favour with the tribunal of the Inquisition, but upon the accusation of undue prying into State affairs he was banished from Tuscany by order of the Grand Duke. Upon this, Mario complained to the Father Inquisitor of Florence, that Calasancius had caused him this disgrace. The holy man was summoned to answer this charge, and although he was

both innocent and ignorant of the entire matter, such were the false representations of Mario that S. Calasanctius was imprisoned.

What a humiliation, what a trial for one who for a lifetime had been a model of Christian virtue, who had fasted and prayed, toiled in the service of God and of men from his youth up ; whose fame for sanctity had been noised abroad throughout Italy, Spain, and other parts of Europe ; one who had received so many divine favours, who had performed many a miracle and enjoyed the visits of both Saints and Angels !

Yet he received his sentence cheerfully. As he was conducted along the road by a guard, the holy man could think only of his Divine Lord betrayed by His own disciple and dragged before the tribunal of an earthly ruler.

Every insult which the wicked Mario could offer him when in his cell was received with wonderful sweetness, and all his sufferings were borne with joy. But in the space of a year the traitor fell ill with a most hideous form of

leprosy, a judgment direct from the hand of an offended God.

Calasancius had already been proved innocent, but Mario still felt for him the most bitter hatred, and now the holy man longed to bring him to a change of heart. He sent daily to inquire about him, he offered Mass to obtain his conversion and begged others to do the same, but it seemed as if the heart of Mario had turned to stone.

He certainly sent word to Calasancius that "if he had offended he asked pardon;" but there was no sign of contrition for his sins against God before his miserable death.

The trials of the Saint were not ended; other enemies rose up against him of whom we cannot now speak, yet his resignation remained as perfect as it had ever been.

But he was not destined to suffer much longer, for the illness which was to close his life began gradually to waste his feeble body. His fortitude and patience were indeed marvellous, for his pains were great, until upon the

25th August, 1648, being ninety-two years of age, he calmly expired with the thrice-uttered name of Jesus upon his lips.

Many wonderful miracles happened after his death, in testimony of his great sanctity, and a sweet fragrance from his body pervaded the chamber in which he breathed his last, even as his life had diffused the fragrance of heavenly virtue.





S. Peter, Apostle and Martyr.

A.D. 65.

SIMON, afterwards named Peter, the son of Jonas, a fisherman of Bethsaida, was one of those disciples especially favoured by Christ, and the one chosen by Him to be the Prince of the Apostles and the rock or foundation of His Church on earth.

Being circumcised according to the rites of the Mosaic law, he then received the name of Simon, a name very common among the Jews: it was Our Lord Who changed or added to it the name of Peter, which signifies a stone or rock.

According to the testimony of ancient

writers, the wife of S. Peter was the daughter of Aristobulus, a brother of S. Barnabas ; but when, at the call of the Master, Peter left his net and all that he had, he also gave up the earthly tie and the earthly love to follow Jesus.

When the promised gift of the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles in the day of Pentecost, and power was bestowed on them to speak in different languages, the people of Jerusalem came to see, and, full of astonishment at so great a marvel, accused them of being “ filled with new wine.”

S. Peter now stood up and declared that neither he nor his companions were excited by wine, but that the prophecy had been accomplished, the promise fulfilled, and the Spirit of God with its seven-fold gifts had been poured out upon them. Strong now in grace, he fearlessly preached of Jesus, and proved from their own Scripture that the despised and crucified Nazarene was indeed the Messiah, the Redeemer of the world which had rejected Him.

So powerful was the effect of his address, so powerful too his appeal to the hearts of the people, that we read three thousand men and women then declared themselves believers.

The Temple was situated in the midst of a large space enclosed by an outer wall, in which wall were many gates leading to different courts, one of which was called the gate Beautiful.

There was a poor lame man in the city whose friends carried him daily to this gate, hoping that those who passed by to the Temple might pity him and give him alms.

As S. Peter with S. John went up together to the Temple one day, they saw this poor man and felt great compassion for his state. Taking him by the hand, S. Peter bade him, in the Name of Jesus, rise up and walk. By the power of God, at the command of His servant, the poor beggar rose from the ground, not standing only, but able to walk—and even, as Scripture tells us, “leaping”—so that he accompanied the Apostles to the Temple, there

to make his thanksgiving for so wonderful a cure of his long infirmity.

He had long been a familiar object to the people of Jerusalem, and when the news of the miracle spread about the city, a crowd collected to behold the change which seemed almost impossible to believe from common report.

S. Peter took the opportunity of preaching to this curious wondering multitude, and again his success was great, for five thousand became Christians.

The Jewish Sanhedrim, or Council, was sitting in a court close by, and when it was told there that people were being converted to the Christian faith, the members of the Council were indignant, and resolved to stop the spread of doctrines which they hated most bitterly. To effect this purpose, they ordered the seizure and imprisonment of the Apostles upon the charge of disturbing the peace of the people, and in the morning S. Peter and S. John were brought before the High-priest, and the rulers, elders, and scribes.

On being asked by what power and in what name he worked miracles, S. Peter preached Christ to the Council, and they, knowing that he had been but a humble fisherman of Bethsaida, marvelled at such an address coming from his lips. Dismissing the prisoners while they consulted together, they said: "What shall we do with these men?"

S.S. Peter and John were then recalled and told that for that time they might go free, but they must teach no more in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.

It was impossible for the Apostles to obey such a command, for had not an authority far above that of any earthly council bidden them "preach the Gospel to every creature?" When they said this, the High-priest was still forced to let them go, because the people just then were so pleased and impressed with the miracle they had actually witnessed, that their anger would have been excited against the Council had any punishment been inflicted upon these wonderful Christian teachers.

A warm love united those primitive Christians; they were like the members of one large family, each desiring and promoting the welfare of the rest. Thus it was that they who were richer sold both lands and houses, and gave the money to the Apostles for the use of their poorer brethren.

There was among the Christians a man named Ananias, who with his wife Sapphira had considerable possessions. Like others, they prepared to part with their worldly goods; but the generous heart and fervent charity were lacking, and with no other than the motive of human respect prompting them, it is not strange that they fell under a very great temptation.

The Evil One suggested to the minds of these two, that it was an easy thing to give a part of the money which they had received as the price of their land—they might keep the rest for their own use and yet appear as generous as their neighbours.

When Ananias came into the presence of S.

Peter with the money in his hand and the false heart and false tongue, it was permitted to the Apostle to know what was concealed in his thoughts, and he told him of the sin by which he had lied not unto men but "unto God."

The awful judgment of the Almighty fell upon the guilty man in that moment, for he fell dead before S. Peter and was carried out and buried immediately.

Not long after, Sapphira came in, ignorant still of the doom of Ananias, and yet ready to repeat the lie upon which they had agreed.

When S. Peter asked her what price had been given for the land, she, like her husband, hesitated not to speak falsely, and then in a moment she also was struck dead, thus causing a great fear to come upon all who witnessed the sudden punishment of her sin.

S. Peter's work for God went on from day to day, healing the sick, instructing the ignorant, exorcising evil spirits, and so his

fame became more and more noised about in the city.

The Jewish Council now interfered once more, and cast the Apostle with S. Paul into the common prison; but in the stillness of night God sent His angel to set them free, and bid them go fearlessly to the Temple and resume their labour for His glory.

When this news was carried to the members of the Sanhedrim, they were more than ever incensed against the Christian teachers, and would probably have ordered them to be immediately put to death had it not been for Gamaliel, who advised delay.

He was one of the most noted among them, for he possessed an unusual degree of learning, but though by his advice they agreed to set S. Peter and his companion free, they were first scourged.

Soon after this event, a fierce persecution troubled the Christians, many of whom suffered a cruel death for Christ's sake, but in due time a period of rest followed, during

which S. Peter visited the different churches, and among other places journeyed to Lydda.

There was a man in that city named Æneas who for eight years had been afflicted with palsy, and S. Peter cured him, thus causing many people to believe. A woman named Tabitha dwelt in Lydda, one so kind and charitable that she was beloved of all men, and bitterly mourned when she was seized with illness and died.

Some of the Christians brought the sad news to S. Peter, and led him to the room where lay her dead body. Putting them all aside the Apostle knelt in prayer, and then turning to the lifeless form said, "Tabitha, arise."

God, whose power is infinite, heard the prayers of His Apostle and permitted another miracle, for at the words the woman opened her eyes, and rising up to new life filled the hearts of all who beheld her with joy and thanksgiving.

In the life of the Apostle Paul we read of the vision by which S. Peter was instructed by

Heaven that the grace of God was offered to the Gentile equally with the Jew, thus preparing him to visit the dwelling of Cornelius and teach him and his assembled friends the good news of God.

So the Apostle was zealously labouring for God by word and work when Herod Agrippa ordered his imprisonment, and for the third time he was seized and cast into a dungeon, with four quaternions of soldiers to keep guard over him.

Herod doubtless feared that S. Peter might again escape his vengeance by supernatural aid, but he believed it impossible that even an angel could set him free when soldiers were employed in turns to watch him, and two were chained to him so that his least movement might rouse them.

Meanwhile the Apostle slept as one at peace with God, although he knew that on the morrow Herod purposed his death; a sleep so soft and deep that he did not awaken to the celestial brightness of his prison until the angel

smote him on the side and bade him "rise up quickly."

In a moment the chains fell off the hands of Peter, and following his heavenly guide to the prison gate—which opened to let him out without any touch of angel or of man—he was free once more.

The Apostle passed through the streets to the house of a Christian woman, where even then his friends were assembled to pray for him; great indeed was their joy when they heard that S. Peter stood at the gate seeking to come in to them.

When the day broke, Herod was told of the wonderful escape of his prisoner, and in his anger he ordered the execution of the soldiers who had been set to guard him. But the punishment of God fell upon the wicked tyrant, and very soon a disease overtook him which caused his end.

S. Peter now undertook many journeys, and in the second year of the Emperor Claudius made his way to Rome, where he resided some

years. He was then banished with the rest of the Jews by a public edict, and went to Jerusalem, but returned again to Rome about the close of the reign of Nero.

When the Apostle confounded the magician Simon Magus, proving how he had deceived and misled the people, the Emperor's anger was such that he ordered S. Peter to be conveyed to the Mamertine prison with S. Paul.

The Christians of the great city were full of sorrow at the loss of their spiritual father and guide, and so earnestly did they implore him to effect his escape in order that he might better aid the Church, that at length their prayers and tears prevailed, and S. Peter got over the prison wall and reached the city gates unmolested.

So far he had gone, when he beheld approaching him the form and face of One he had known long—even his Master. An expression of love was upon those divine features, and yet a love not unmixed with sorrow, nay, even reproach !

"Lord, whither goest Thou?" said S. Peter.

"I go to Rome to be crucified again," was the reply, and in those words the Apostle understood that his Lord willed to suffer a second crucifixion in the person of His servant. At once Peter turned, retraced his steps to the prison, and yielded himself willingly to the hands of his jailers—willingly, too, submitted to his scourging, and suffered himself to be led to the place of execution, for he knew it was what God asked of him rather than the active service he had already given.

Crucifixion, as the most painful and the most shameful death, was that chosen for S. Peter; but he begged as a favour that he might be placed upon the cross with his head downwards, not deeming himself worthy to suffer in the same position as the Lord he had three times denied.

The body of the Apostle was buried in the Vatican, and a small church built over his grave, but when Heliogabalus destroyed it, his remains were carried to the Appian Way until the

time of Cornelius, who had them reconveyed to the Vatican, which Constantine afterwards enlarged.

In old mosaics S. Peter is represented with a scroll or book, but about the eighth century, the keys were placed in his hand as a symbol of the power to absolve and the power to bind, and thus open the gates of heaven and of hell.

This great Apostle is commemorated with S. Paul upon the 29th June. There is also a festival of the Chair of S. Peter at Antioch, on account of his presidency over the Church there, while the 1st August has for many centuries been devoted to the celebration of his miraculous deliverance from prison, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

We must, in closing our brief sketch of S. Peter's life, refer to the Epistles written by his hand for the instruction, not only of the early Christians, but for us in the present day.

When the first of these was written the Christians had been dispersed about Asia

Minor by the persecuting cruelty of their enemies, and therefore much was said to console them in their afflictions and to excite them to great patience under suffering and loss.

Some two years later the second Epistle was written, only a short time before the Apostle was crucified. In it he warns the Christians against listening to false teachers, and tells them how suddenly the day of the Lord will come, even "as a thief in the night." He therefore entreats them to be ready for that time so that they might be found "without spot and blameless," and concludes by his exhortation to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Let us take that injunction as S. Peter's charge to us, praying and striving to become daily more full of the grace and the love and the knowledge of Him whom to know is "life eternal."



S. Paul, Apostle and Martyr.

A.D. 65.

SO well do we know the story of the miraculous conversion of S. Paul from an enemy to a servant of the Church of God, so familiar to us are the details of his work for souls as recorded in Holy Scripture, that it will suffice now to give but a brief mention of his life amongst those of the holy Apostles, and chiefly of the time following upon the account given in the Acts.

It would seem that immediately after his release from prison, S. Paul addressed himself with renewed zeal to his special work as the Apostle of the Gentiles, and regardless of danger or fatigue preached in both the East and West the Gospel of Christ.

Some early historians say that not only did he journey to Spain, but to the "Isles of the Sea," by which it is understood that both Gauls and Britons may have been among those who heard the Christian faith from the lips of this great Apostle.

When S. Paul returned once more to Rome it was about the eighth or ninth year of the reign of Nero, and by the imperial command he, with S. Peter, was thrown into the Mamertine prison to await death.

As a Roman citizen it was not lawful to inflict upon the Apostle the scourging usually given to condemned criminals ; but Cardinal Baronius relates that there existed in one of the churches of Rome the pillars to which both these holy servants of God were bound in preparation for this degrading punishment.

As S. Paul was led to his death he was permitted to bring about the conversion of three among the soldiers forming his guard, who a few days later became martyrs for Christ's love. Being arrived at the appointed spot some three

miles beyond the city, the old Apostle received the stroke which ended his glorious career. An ancient tradition tells that when the Saint was beheaded, something resembling milk rather than blood poured from his veins, which fell upon the garments of his executioner, the marvel of which effected his conversion.

A church was raised by Constantine over the grave of S. Paul, and adorned with many a costly gift, but the Emperor Theodosius caused a larger and more magnificent church to be erected in its place as more honourable to so great a servant of God. Effigies of S. Paul existed in very early times, and tradition tells that he was small of stature, with a grave sweet countenance and eyes of wonderful power and beauty—a type which is adhered to in all early pictures of the Apostle. His small size is referred to by S. Chrysostom, who calls him “a man three cubits high, yet tall enough to reach heaven.” Of that heaven he had been permitted a glimpse when he was caught up into its wonder and beauty, to de-

scribe which no earthly words sufficed. But though he might not tell what he had beheld, how often must he have mused upon it when he was weary, or troubled; how often must he have longed to "depart and be with Christ!"

So death to him was gain, though it was a death disgraceful in the eyes of his enemies—gain, for absent from the body he was indeed "present with the Lord."

For a more detailed account of this Saint's life, the reader is referred to *The Story of the Life of S. Paul.* By M. F. S. . Price 2s. 6d. R. Washbourne.





S. James the Greater, Apostle and Martyr.

A.D. 43.

JAMES, surnamed the Greater, was by birth a Galilean, and one of S. Peter's companions as a fisherman.

His father was Zebedee, and his mother Mary, surnamed Salome, styled the sister of the Blessed Virgin, not because she was strictly so, but because it was a Jewish custom to call all near relations by the name of brothers or sisters.

Neither Scripture nor tradition give much account of S. James after the Ascension of our Lord, but it is told that he was bold to reprove the Jews, and strong in contending for the truths of Christianity.

It was thus that S. James incurred the hatred of Herod Agrippa when, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, he "stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church."

It was by his command that S. James was cast into prison and sentenced to death. As the Apostle was led forth to his martyrdom, the man who had laid the accusation against him was so powerfully impressed by his calmness and courage, that he made his way through the crowd and falling down at the feet of S. James, implored his pardon.

"Peace, my son, peace be to thee and the pardon of thy faults," said the holy Apostle, raising him from the ground, and at this the once bitter enemy of Christ declared himself a Christian, and was beheaded at the same time and with the same sword as S. James, the Apostolic Proto-martyr.

The remains of the Apostle were in later times removed to Spain and preserved at Compostella, for which reason he has been held as the special patron of Spain, and the cry of

“Sant Jago” was that with which the Christian soldiers often fell upon the Moorish hosts.

S. James is usually represented with the Holy Gospels in one hand and in the other a pilgrim’s staff, as being the first among the Apostles who went on a missionary work. Sometimes he wears the pilgrim’s hat and cloak adorned with scallop-shells, in reference to the many pilgrimages made to his shrine at Compostella.





S. Matthias, Apostle and Martyr.

A.D. 64.

MHEN by the suicide of Judas Iscariot there was a vacant place among the Apostles of our Lord, they betook themselves to the house of S. John after their return from Mount Olivet, to fill up the number by some one who could bear witness to the life and death and miracles of Jesus.

The way of election was by drawing lots, a method of choice much used by both Jews and Gentiles, and these lots being put into an urn, the name of Matthias was drawn, and he thus became one of the Apostles.

The Holy Ghost had not then been sent down upon them, but soon after, its great gifts

were given to fit the Apostles for the difficult work which lay before them, and **Matthias** among the rest received his charge to preach in and about Judea.

The Greek tradition tells us that he travelled into Cappadocia, where he was treated with the greatest cruelty by the inhuman and barbarous people, and while among them he suffered martyrdom for Christ's sake, after converting many to a knowledge and love of Him. The manner of his death is not positively certain, but it is believed to have been the painful death of crucifixion ; his body was kept for a length of time at Jerusalem, and thence translated to Rome.





S. Philip, Apostle and Martyr.

A.D. 2.

NBethsaida, the city of S.S. Andrew and Peter, Philip was born, and there he followed the calling of a fisherman, like most other men of that place.

It was but the day after Our Lord had met and talked with the brothers, that He found S. Philip, and commanded him also, like Peter and Andrew, to follow Him.

In Upper Asia Philip began his work, and gained many converts through his preaching and through the miracles which he worked by the power of God, baptising numbers into the Christian faith, healing the sick, exorcising evil spirits, and appointing pastors over the different churches.

After the expiration of some years, Philip passed on to Hierapolis in Phrygia, a city of great wealth, but full of idolaters. A huge serpent was the special object of worship there, which greatly troubled S. Philip, who continually entreated God to enable him to procure the death of this monster. When this prayer was granted, the Apostle had great success in awakening the minds of the people to perceive the folly of their superstition. This enraged the magistrates, who caused S. Philip to be seized, severely scourged, and then cast into prison.

At the appointed time he was led out for execution, and after being bound was hung by the neck from a pillar, as most accounts say, though some few relate that he was crucified.

It is recorded too that as the martyr died, the earth began to quake and the ground threatened to sink beneath the feet of the assembled multitude. On perceiving this, their terror was extreme, and with one accord they began to bewail their sins, upon which 't sank no more and the danger passed.

S. Bartholomew took down the body of the martyred Apostle and gave it burial, assisted by Mariamne, the sister of S. Philip.

The active labours of the Apostles prevented many of them from leaving any written record behind them, and nothing comes to us from the hand of S. Philip, although the Gnostics produced a gospel to which they falsely gave his name.

Some of the representations of Philip the Apostle and Martyr give him a basket containing loaves and fishes, in allusion to the time when Jesus miraculously fed the five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes as recorded in S. John; when Our Lord, turning to S. Philip, said unto him: "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?"

The festival of S. Philip is united with that of S. James the Less, and celebrated upon the 1st May.



S. James the Less, Apostle and Martyr.

A.D. 62.

JAMES, surnamed the Just, was nearly related to the Blessed Virgin, and therefore referred to in Scripture as the brother of Our Lord.

No distinct account is given of his birth, neither do we hear much of him until after the resurrection, when we know by the testimony of S. Paul that Christ “was seen of James.”

Tradition tells us that this Apostle, after the Last Supper, had said that he would no more taste bread until his Master was risen from the dead. Jesus therefore came to him, and taking bread bade him eat, “for the Son of Man is truly risen from among them that sleep.”

After the ascension of our divine Lord, S. James was chosen Bishop of Jerusalem, presiding there in the great Council concerning the rites of the Mosaic law. Though strictly adhering to the customs of his own Jewish people, S. James did not expect the Christian Gentiles to observe the Jewish laws; he only decreed that they should carefully observe purity and holiness of life and obedience to the commandments of Christ.

Under the wise and prudent government of S. James the Church flourished, and many of the noblest and greatest of the Jews became converted to the Christian faith. This made his enemies so angry that they began to conspire against his life. Under the rule of Festus, it was not possible to achieve this end, but when a successor was appointed, Ananias, the high-priest, determined to put an end to the holy Apostle before the new governor could arrive. To this end, S. James was brought before a council under the accusation of violating the law, but the Scribes and

Pharisees sought to entrap him in a wily manner, and pretending great confidence in his teaching, desired that he would mount upon a pinnacle or wing of the Temple where all might see and hear him, and there tell the people Who the Crucified Jesus really was.

S. James ascended the pinnacle, and rejoicing to proclaim his faith, cried out in a firm clear voice : " Why do ye inquire of Jesus, the Son of Man ? He sits in heaven on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and will come again upon the earth to judge it."

Many who heard these words believed them, which the angry Jews perceived ; so in their rage they seized James, and declaring that he had become an impostor, threw him violently down from the place on which he stood. Bruised, injured as he was, he was still able to rise, and kneeling, pray for his murderers. One among the multitude begged the Jews to spare him, but they were deaf to all entreaty and began to bury the holy Apostle beneath a shower of stones until one man beat out his

brains with a club. Thus died S. James, in the year 62, when he had attained the age of ninety-six years, and he was buried in a tomb upon Mount Olivet.

Not long before his martyrdom he wrote his Epistle called "Catholic," because it was meant for all Christians wherever they might be scattered; in it he exhorts the brethren to great patience under affliction, and directs them to seek wisdom of God, Who giveth to all men liberally.

S. James is ordinarily represented with a club of a peculiar shape, like that which was the instrument of his death. A legend tells us that so nearly did the features of this Apostle resemble the beautiful features of Jesus, that the traitor Judas feared lest the band of soldiers might seize him rather than his Master. It was on this account that when he came with them to the garden of Gethsemane he approached the Master and kissed Him, so that they should know on whom to lay their hands.



S. Andrew, Apostle and Martyr.

A.D. 70.

 HIS Apostle—the first-called of Christ —was born at Bethsaida, and there dwelt with Peter, his brother, employing himself in the calling of a fisherman.

Our Lord had other designs for him. He would make Andrew a “fisher of souls,” and therefore the sweet words of invitation which won the heart of the simple unlearned man, who, in his joy at finding Christ, brought his brother Peter to share the blessing with him.

After spending some short time in the company of Jesus, and witnessing His first miracle in Cana, the brothers returned to their own home until the day when, after hours of

fruitless toil, they let down their nets at the Master's word, and drew up the miraculous draught of fishes. Then it was that Jesus called both Andrew and Peter to leave their nets and boats, and follow Him whithersoever He went.

When our Lord had left His Apostles to their work on earth, Scythia and the neighbouring countries were assigned to S. Andrew as his province, and there he began to preach and teach the Christian faith. Having travelled in Thrace, Macedonia, and Thessaly, the Apostle came to Patrea, a city of Achaia, where many people abandoned paganism.

Ægeas the pro-consul seeing this, tried by threats and by persuasions to win them back to belief in their false gods, but without success. Then his own wife and his brother being visited by dangerous disease, were miraculously cured by S. Andrew, and were thus convinced of the power of God, and determined to profess Christianity.

Ægeas now summoned the Apostle to appear

before him, charged with introducing a new religion and teaching that the despised Jesus was God made man.

S. Andrew began to tell Ægeas of the wonderful love of this same Jesus, Who had died on the Cross to purchase the salvation of the world. Sweetly and powerfully he spoke, yet Ægeas felt no softening of heart towards him ; he declared that unless S. Andrew obeyed his command and offered sacrifice to the gods he should die upon the Cross he talked so much of.

The Apostle replied that each day he offered sacrifice—the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, whereat Ægeas became so angry that he would not hear more, but ordered Andrew back to his prison.

The people of Achaia had learned to love and venerate the Christian teacher, and they were with difficulty restrained by his entreaties from breaking out into open rebellion against the pro-consul. Over and over again the gentle Apostle begged them to imitate the silent

patience of Christ, and over and over again he entreated them not to hinder him from obtaining the martyr's crown he so desired.

Next day Ægeas again sent for his prisoner, urging him not to throw away his own life by persisting in his Christian faith ; he even offered Andrew rewards and honours if he would yield.

But these promises of good were of no avail. The Apostle answered by telling the pro-consul of higher joys and greater honours, even those which are eternal—upon which, sentence of death was quickly pronounced on him.

But first there was the scourging, seven lictors taking it by turns to inflict the cruel stripes which tore his body, but filled his soul with joy, for was he not then drinking of the Chalice of his Master ?

Seeing the invincible patience and courage of the Apostle, Ægeas now ordered his crucifixion, but with the thought of lengthening his sufferings he was to be bound with cords instead of pierced with nails.

Coming within sight of the Cross, S. Andrew could not restrain his joy. "Hail, precious Cross!" he cried, "thou hast been consecrated by the body of my Lord, thou hast been adorned with His limbs as with the richest jewels. I come to thee exulting and glad! receive me to thy arms. O good Cross, long have I loved thee, long have I desired and sought thee! Now thou art found by me and art made ready for my longing soul! Receive me into thy arms; taking me from men, present me to my Master, that He Who redeemed me on thee, may by thee receive me."

He then began to pray as he was fastened to his cross, and from it taught them of Christ and entreated them to be constant in the faith they had embraced.

During two days the Apostle hung there suffering, dying, yet still preaching of Jesus and "Him crucified." The people besought Ægeas to release the Apostle with such tears and prayers that he—fearing they might be heard, and dreading to lose his martyr's crown

—earnestly begged God that he might depart this life. His petition was answered, and he immediately passed into the company of the blessed, and his body being taken down and embalmed, was honourably buried by the wife of the pro-consul.

In later times it was removed by order of Constantine the Great, and interred in the large church built by him in honour of the Apostles.

Some relics of S. Andrew were brought to Scotland early in the fourth century, from which time the Saint has been honoured as the special patron of that country. He has also been greatly venerated in England, about six hundred ancient churches being dedicated to him.

The instrument of S. Andrew's martyrdom is affirmed by most early writers to have been a cross *decussate*, formed of two pieces of timber crossing each other in the shape of the letter X.—This form of cross is always known by the name of this Apostle and Martyr.

Many beautiful stories are told of the efficacy of the Apostle's prayers while he was still living, one of which runs much like this :

S. Andrew being at Corinth, busy in his work of fishing for souls, met with a very old man named Nicholas who said that his had been a lifelong course of sin, but who entreated the Apostle to pray that he might be converted. During the space of five days S. Andrew prayed and fasted, at the end of which time Our Blessed Lord appearing to him said : "I grant thy petition, but My Will is that as thou hast fasted for this aged man, so now must he fast and afflict himself if he indeed desires to be saved."

Upon hearing this, S. Andrew commanded all the Christians in that city to make earnest prayer to the Almighty while Nicholas fasted. The old man obeyed the injunctions of the servant of God, and going to his own home, bestowed all his possessions upon the poor, and for six months practised the most austere penance. At the end of that time God took him from this world, and revealed to S. Andrew that his prayers had been effectual, and the once sinful soul was saved.



S. Thomas, Apostle and Martyr.

A.D. 31.

CCORDING to the ordinary custom of the Jews, this Apostle was known, not only by his Hebrew name, but by its equivalent in the Greek and Syriac tongues, "Didymus."

The Scripture narrative gives us little knowledge of S. Thomas, save that when after the resurrection Christ appeared in the midst of His disciples, saying, "Peace be unto you," as He showed them the sacred Wounds in His hands and in His side, he was not present.

When, therefore, the others told him that they had indeed seen the Lord, S. Thomas was full of doubt, and said that unless he could see the print of the nails in those pierced hands,

it was not possible that he should believe it was his crucified Master.

So eight days passed ; again the disciples were gathered together, Thomas among the rest; the doors were closed that none might enter in unseen, for the little company feared the Jews.

Suddenly One stood in their midst Who had come to them thus before ; One Who said to Thomas : " Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing."

Faithless he had been, but was so no longer; love and faith were firm and strong in that Divine Presence, and Thomas cried out : " My Lord and my God."

We must now pass on to the time following the Ascension, when S. Thomas went to preach the Gospel among the Parthians, Medes, Persians, and others, coming at last to India.

Many he converted, many he baptised, and some became the companions of his life and labours. At first the Apostle almost shrank from his mission among the wild and intract-

able people of India; but God sent a vision to encourage him to trust in the Divine Presence which should accompany him in danger and in discouragement.

Far into the country he penetrated, strong in the strength of One Who had said : " Lo, I am with you always." Many noble and many poor were converted before the Apostle laid down his life as a martyr.

One day he was praying, so rapt in contemplation that he perceived not the approach of a band of armed men, who with swords and spears attacked him until he fell, pierced through with the weapon which despatched his soul from earth to heaven.

S. Gregory of Tours has recorded many wonders wrought at the tomb of S. Thomas, in the church where his disciples laid his body. In A.D. 1521, his relics were transferred to Goa, and deposited in a church dedicated in his honour.

This Apostolic martyr is usually represented with a book of the Gospels in one hand, while the other grasps a spear such as that by which he met his end.



S. Barnabas, Apostle and Martyr.

A.D. 51.

BN ancient times the island of Cyprus was much inhabited by Jews, and here the Apostle Barnabas was born, his parents being of the house of Levi.

At first he seems to have been called "Joses," which name was changed by the Apostles into that of Barnabas, or the "Son of Consolation," probably in commemoration of the consolation they experienced through his charity in selling his possessions for the benefit of the poorer Christians.

With S. Paul, Barnabas had been educated by the great Jewish teacher Gamaliel; they were thus bound together by the tie of early

friendship, and so it was to Barnabas Paul applied when he desired to be introduced to the fellowship of the Apostles after his conversion.

Together they started upon their missionary labours, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, until fourteen years had passed. Then that difference of opinion rose between these two Apostles, which proves to us the infirmity even of God's faithful servants, yet proves also that apparent evil can be over-ruled for good, as in this case, whereby the separation of S. Paul and S. Barnabas led to the wider diffusion of Christian truth.

According to one account, Barnabas came into Italy after that time and consecrated the church at Milan ; others affirm that he passed into Egypt. The remainder of his life seems to have been spent by S. Barnabas in converting the people of his own native island, a work for which he was rewarded at last by martyrdom.

Disputing with some Jews in their syna-

gogue, striving to convince them that Christ Jesus was the Messiah of prophecy, they became enraged, and shutting the Apostle up until night, came to him there and stoned him to death.

He was buried close to the spot of his martyrdom, and four centuries later the relics were discovered and removed with great honour to Constantinople, where a church was erected and dedicated in his honour.

Tradition tells us that at the discovery of these holy relics there was seen upon the breast of S. Barnabas a copy of S. Matthew's Gospel, written by the hand of the martyr, and in the Hebrew tongue. Old writers say that S. Barnabas was a man of very noble presence, and thus he was imagined to be the god Jupiter by the Pagans at Lystra, when with S. Paul he preached the Gospel there.

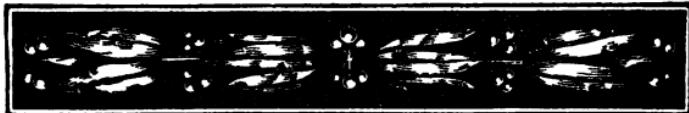
In former times great devotion existed in England for S. Barnabas, and his feast was kept with much rejoicing. According to the old style, S. Barnabas' day was the long-

est day, and from this arose the quaint rhyme :

“Barnaby bright, Barnaby bright,
The longest day and the shortest night.”

This Apostle is usually represented with the Gospel in one hand, and in the other a stone and a pilgrim’s staff.





S. Bartholomew, Apostle and Martyr.

A.D. 71.

SBARTHOLOMEW has been from olden time greatly reverenced in England, and yet the details of his life are but scarce.

Beyond the undoubted fact that he was one of the Twelve Apostles, Scripture says nothing; but it is supposed that he is the same person as "Nathaniel," to whom Philip came with the tidings that he had found Christ.

Unlike Philip, Nathaniel was a man of learning, well versed in the doctrines of the Jews, and he could not receive the testimony with the unquestioning faith of the simple fisherman.

“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” he asks; but in the presence of Jesus he is convinced, and hesitates not to affirm: “Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel.”

A disciple now, Nathaniel follows the Master, seeing His glory in the miracle of Cana, and making one of the little company who sojourned some days at Capharnaum.

In after days we find him in his name of Bartholomew journeying to Northern India with his tidings of Christ, and returning thence to Asia.

At Hierapolis S. Bartholomew with S. Philip laboured for the conversion of the people there with such success, that the authorities became angry, and even had him seized and fastened on a cross to die. But a sudden fear of God came upon these magistrates, the fear that some calamity would fall upon their city if they took the Apostle’s life, and so Bartholomew was cut down and set free, and made his way to Lycaonia.

The last journey he undertook was to the people of Armenia, who were full of idolatry, and so many received his teaching there that Astyages the king ordered him to be put to death.

The Gentile converts mourned to lose their teacher; but he comforted them and gave them holy counsels up to the last moment of his life. A terrible end it was—first, as it is thought, placed upon a cross head downwards like S. Peter, and afterwards flayed alive; yet to the martyr a joyful end, for he knew it was the way to heaven and the crown of reward.

The remains of S. Bartholomew were several times removed, but last of all deposited at Rome. His special emblem is a butcher's flaying-knife, and in medieval times, in commemoration of his death, little knives were given away at Croyland Abbey upon the festival of this Apostle and Martyr of the Church, who is now among the great and glorious ones in the kingdom of heaven.



SS. Simon and Jude, Apostles and Martyrs.

HERE was a sect among the Pharisees termed the Zealots—great asserters of the law and strict upholders of religious rites and ceremonies. To this party belonged Simon when called to the Apostolate by Our Lord.

In after-times these Zealots fell into great excesses, but in the days of S. Simon it is thought that they had not become so violent in executing vengeance upon offenders against the law.

In Gospel history no further mention than that of his call to Apostolic work is made of Simon, but when the followers of Christ dis-

persed to evangelise all nations, he is believed to have made his way to Egypt and thence to Africa and Libya, preaching the Gospel in spite of hindrances and difficulties. Greek historians affirm that he went at last to Britain, where he was crucified by the Pagans; others declare that he was sawn asunder, and that the country of his martyrdom was Persia, as was that of S. Jude.

Jude, or Judas, was a name very dear to the Jews, but perhaps owing to it having been borne by the traitor disciple, S. Jude seems to have been called Thaddeus by the Apostles, or in some way specially distinguished from Iscariot.

S. Jude was the brother of S. James the Less, and therefore one of Our Lord's near kinsmen.

When first he set out on his work of preaching the Gospel, he went through Samaria to Idumea, and later to Syria and also to Mesopotamia. He is considered by S. Jerome to be that Thaddeus said to have been sent by S.

Thomas to Abgarno, whom, with his people, he converted by the miracles wrought in God's name.

After great success in his missionary work throughout Persia, S. Jude was barbarously put to death for Christ's sake. He has left us the Catholic Epistle bearing his name, which is addressed to Christians of every place.

Only two *ancient* churches in England were dedicated in the joint names of these two Apostles. S. Simon is usually represented bearing a long saw, the instrument of his martyrdom; while S. Jude has a club or cross, and often a boat near him, in allusion to his calling. Little as we know of his life, we possess his written testimony of the love of God, in which he exhorts us to "keep ourselves;" "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."



S. Matthew, Apostle, Evangelist, and Martyr.

A.D. 90.

MATTHEW — known also by the name of Levi—was believed to have been born at Nazareth, a “Hebrew of the Hebrews,” and son to Alpheus and Mary, the kinswoman of the Blessed Virgin.

His calling was that of a publican or toll-gatherer to the Romans, a calling held in bad repute among the Jews, for they who practised it were ordinarily covetous and extortioners, and commonly spoken of as thieves by even the Gentiles.

The Jews, too, felt bitterly aggrieved by the compulsory payment of the tribute-money; it

seemed to them an infringement upon their liberty as a free-born people, the privileged people of Almighty God.

It would appear that Matthew was chiefly employed in collecting the duties or customs upon goods coming by way of the Sea of Galilee, and also in taking the toll or tribute which passengers by water had to pay.

Here then by the seaside—according to S. Mark's account—Matthew, or Levi, dwelt, when our Divine Lord left Capharnaum to walk by the shore while He taught the people who crowded round Him; and seeing Matthew sitting in his custom-house, said unto him, “Follow Me.”

He was not a poor and needy man, not so lowly or so hard-working as the fishermen of Galilee; yet he left his lucrative calling, his position, his friends—left wealth for poverty at the Master's bidding.

We may suppose that dwelling in Capharnaum, the scene of so many of Christ's miracles, Matthew had heard Him teach, had looked



S. Mark, Evangelist and Martyr.

A.D. 68.

MARK is believed to have been born of Jewish parents, descended from the tribe of Levi, and his name, which is Roman, was most probably assumed when he removed into Italy.

He was converted by one of the Apostles, most likely by S. Peter, whom he attended in his travels as an interpreter, for he had a talent in expounding the great Apostle's words, both spoken and written, to those who did not comprehend the language in which they were delivered.

It was by S. Peter that Mark was sent to teach the Christian faith in Egypt, where he

converted many, both men and women. He afterwards removed to Libya, where his success was also great, and then returning to Alexandria began to order the affairs of the Church there. But while thus engaged, the season approached when the people were accustomed to celebrate the great solemnities in honour of their idol, and being greatly excited, they came upon S. Mark at the time he was engaged in celebrating the worship of God, and seizing him, dragged him through the streets with his feet bound by cords, and then thrust him for the night into prison. Next morning their cruelty broke out afresh, and he was dragged about until he expired from loss of blood, upon which the inhuman people burnt his torn and wounded body with cries of exultation.

The Christians, however, collected the remains of the martyred Evangelist and reverently buried them near the spot where he had so often preached to them. Afterwards these relics were removed with great pomp to Venice, and the Saint venerated as the special patron

of that state, where a costly church was raised in his honour.

The litanies sung upon S. Mark's day in procession had their origin at the time of S. Gregory the Great. About the year 590, a terrible pestilence was raging, and S. Gregory, desiring the safety of the people, commanded a procession to be formed to sing these solemn litanies to appease the anger of Almighty God. Seven companies were formed, the first consisting of the secular clergy, the second of abbots and monks, the third of nuns, the fourth of children, the fifth of laymen, the sixth of widows, and the seventh of matrons; each of which companies was led by the priests.

The plague seized upon some eighty of those who took part in the procession; yet S. Gregory continued it, praying fervently to Almighty God, and these earnest persevering supplications availed very soon to stay the pestilence which had raged so terribly.

The representations of S. Mark are often

symbolical, for the Evangelists have ever had their own artistic history, being figured under different types.

Sometimes the type chosen has been that of the river parted into four heads; such may be met with in the catacombs or ancient sarcophagi, Our Lord being portrayed in human form and standing upon a height from which spring four rivers or fountains.

Again, the four mysterious creatures of Ezekiel's vision have been chosen as symbols of the Evangelists, S. Mark having the lion because he specially set forth the royal dignity of Christ, or because the lion was deemed an emblem of the resurrection, and S. Mark has been often called the historian of the resurrection.





S. Luke, Evangelist and Martyr.

A.D. 63.

LUKE was not one of the Apostles, nor is it supposed that his conversion took place until after the Ascension of Christ, for he testifies that he was not, from the beginning, an eye-witness of all the wondrous scenes connected with the Divine life on earth.

It is probable that while residing in Antioch, S. Luke was won for God by S. Paul, becoming from that time the companion of his labours and travels, following him in the hour of danger even to minister to his necessities as a prisoner at Rome.

S. Luke was a physician; but as the art of

healing was frequently exercised by slaves, it does not follow that his station was higher than that of most of the disciples of Christ.

To the Apostle Paul, Luke appears to have been very dear, as he is spoken of in the Epistles of the Saint as "the beloved physician," and one whose praise was in all the churches.

There have been different opinions as to whether S. Luke left Paul before he had finished his course by martyrdom; some say that he went into Egypt and Libya preaching the Gospel and converting many to God, and taking charge of the Church in Thebais. There have been different accounts also as to the time and manner of S. Luke's death; but S. Gregory Nazianzen and others assert that he was a martyr, and it is recorded that a party of heathens attacked him, and having no cross ready for his execution, hanged him upon an olive tree, when he was about eighty years of age.

The two books written by S. Luke are the Acts of the Apostles, and also the Gospel

bearing his name, both of which are dedicated to Theophilus, evidently a man of some considerable dignity. The beautiful Magnificat, Benedictus, and Nunc Dimittis are all in S. Luke's Gospel; it seems also to abound in passages which refer to the mercy of God to those who are truly penitent, such as the parable of the lost sheep. In such he is more circumstantial than the other Evangelists, but his words bear the same marks of Divine inspiration, and like all the other Gospels demonstrate most clearly that he who wrote it was under the guidance of One Who will not let His servants err in teaching others, but will Himself lead them into "all truth."





S. John, Apostle and Evangelist.

A.D. 99.

JOUNGEST of all the Apostles was he whom we know as the "Beloved Disciple," he who was permitted to rest his head upon the Sacred Heart throbbing with love for men, and afterwards to make that Divine love his constant theme.

John was the brother of James whom Herod Agrippa had put to death, and therefore the son of Zebedee and Salome.

From his earliest years he had doubtless heard of the time when the long-foretold Messiah should be given to Israel, and thus when John Baptist came to preach penance and to prepare the way for his Master, John, after-

wards the Evangelist, enrolled himself among the Saint's disciples, and was directed by him to Jesus by the words, "Behold the Lamb of God."

From that hour, S. John became a follower of Christ, and his love was so deep and strong and true that he was admitted to great and particular favour by Our Lord.

With SS. James and Peter, John was suffered to be present at the miracle of the raising of the young daughter of Jairus; they too were permitted to attend their Master to the Mount of Transfiguration and to go with Him in the first hour of His bitter Passion to the sorrowful Garden of Gethsemane.

Truly John fled in the moment when the soldiers came to seize upon Jesus—fled because overcome by a great and sudden fear; but love soon conquered, and he returned to the hall of judgment to be near his Lord during His trial, and with aching agonised heart beheld the Crucifixion, and received the last earthly wish of that beloved Master, and took the Virgin Mother to his own home.

During the remaining fifteen years of Mary's life on earth, John remained with her in Jerusalem, but after she had been assumed to heaven he made his way to Asia, there to preach the Gospel of Christ and to confirm those who had already received the truth.

The churches of Pergamos, of Smyrna, of Sardis, and others, were founded by S. John ; but his chief residence was at Ephesus, which church he governed.

During the reign of the Emperor Domitian, a great persecution was raised against Christians, and by his order the Apostle was sent for and carried to the gate of Rome called *Latina*, where he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil.

Doubtless S. John offered his life gladly to God in that moment; yet the Will of the Almighty was not to accept him among the company of martyrs, but to prevent the fiery bath from causing him either pain or injury, so that he came forth from it refreshed as if it had been clear pure water.

Domitian's disappointment and rage were great, and believing this miracle had been effected by the power of magic, of which men spoke and thought so much in those days, he banished the aged Apostle to the desolate isle of Patmos in the Ægean sea.

It was a bleak and barren spot, and thus chosen by the Emperors of Rome as especially suited for the residence of criminals, there being no chance of escape and no possibility of aid being rendered to them.

Away from all who could comfort him, Domitian deemed his punishment the most severe which he could inflict upon the Apostle, short of positive death ; but his power could not shut heaven from the captive's sight, and God granted to S. John glorious visions of that "Jerusalem the Golden" which he mystically describes in the Apocalypse or Book of Revelations.

In this book, the glory of gold and the radiance of rare gems are employed to figure to us the splendour of heaven, still even

the most learned of men must fail to comprehend what is reserved for us in that bright home; we only know and love to think that there is perfect peace, perfect joy, for no sorrow and no care can enter in, neither shall there be any more sin—it will be holiness, light, love, and “Christ all and in all!”

At length Domitian died and was succeeded by Nerva, under whose milder rule S. John was allowed to leave Patmos for Ephesus, in which city he wrote his Gospel.

This Gospel abounds not so much in narrative as in doctrine, the design and work of Christ being specially dwelt upon.

The reason for this seems to lie in the fact that certain heresies prevailed in those early days when men were beginning openly to deny the Divinity of Our Lord—an error which S. John sought to counteract. He also supplies some passages of Evangelical history which had been omitted by the other Evangelists.

S. John was the only one of the Apostles who did not die a martyr's death—it was the Will of God that he should remain a “living example of holiness unto all men,” to the great age of nearly a hundred years.

Three Epistles come to us from the hand of the Beloved Disciple.

In the first of these he addresses Christians generally, telling them that in Jesus we have eternal life and fellowship with the Father, but that holiness of life must be the fruit of this faith, for “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”

He goes on to preach the forgiveness of sins, and to insist upon fraternal charity as the proof of love to God; he also warns us not to give ear to false teachers who are not led by the Spirit of God.

The second Epistle of S. John was written for the purpose of encouraging a Christian matron with her children to walk perseveringly in the way of truth, and to avoid any dealings

with those who taught not the true doctrine of Christ Jesus.

The third Epistle is addressed to one called Gaius, of whose good and charitable deeds the Apostle had heard with joy.

It seemed the especial work of S. John to teach the grand, yet simple lesson of Divine love, and that love to all men which must spring from the heart which is indeed penetrated with this love of God. "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another;" thus did he write for us of later times as well as for those who heard the message also from his holy lips.

Tradition tells us a beautiful story of S. John's last days on earth. Feeling that his time was short, and being so weak that he could no longer walk to the church where he had been accustomed to teach, the old Apostle entreated his friends to bear him in their arms so that he might once more speak of Christ.

They did what he desired; but when he looked round upon the assembly his strength

failed him, the words he longed to utter died upon his feeble tongue, he could only raise his trembling hands in a last blessing and falter, "Little children, love one another, love one another!"

Among the other cruelties which the Emperor Domitian practised upon the holy Apostle John, was the sending him a poisoned cup. But the Saint, taking it in his hand, made the sacred sign of the Cross, at which a serpent sprang from it, and, without doing harm to any one, glided away. This cup is preserved at Rome, in the church of S. John Lateran, as well as the tunic of the Apostle, and a piece of the chain with which he was bound on the journey from Ephesus to Rome.

A singular devotion has been entertained for S. John by many of the Saints. Among these is S. Edward the Confessor, of whom we read that he never refused anything asked in the name of the Apostle. On one occasion S. John himself appeared in a beggar's dress beseeching alms, and the pious king, having no

money with him, took the ring from his finger and gave it to the beggar.

It was returned to him afterwards by S. John, with the tidings of his death upon a certain day, which prediction was fulfilled.

To both S. Briget of Sweden and S. Gertrude, the Apostle appeared several times in vision, and when the last-named Saint asked God to reveal to her how she could show her love and gratitude to His beloved disciple, the answer was this:

“If any one will say an ‘Our Father’ daily in honour of this Apostle, reminding him of the faithfulness which filled his heart when he learnt this prayer from My lips, he will surely obtain for such an one the gift of persevering in sanctifying grace to the end of his life.”

There is an oft-told legend of S. John’s life which we cannot omit here, because it shows so clearly his love for souls and his tenderness to sinners.

After his sojourn at Patmos, the Apostle met in a certain city with a youth whom he per-

suaed to begin to walk in the way of eternal life. Being compelled to go elsewhere, S. John entrusted this youth to the care of the Bishop, calling upon Our Lord to witness his charge solemnly given in the church of the city.

The Bishop promised to guide and watch over the young man, and did indeed baptise him and instruct him carefully in Christian doctrine ; but he allowed him to go from his care too soon, so that, borne down by strong temptation, he fell into many and grievous sins.

One night he went with his bad companions to take part in a highway robbery, and the desire for gain took such hold of his mind that he became one of the chief robbers and assassins in those parts.

Time passed, and S. John, returning to the city, sought the Bishop and said : " Give me back him whom I committed to your charge in the presence of Christ Jesus."

" He is dead," said the Bishop. " Dead to God, for he has become a robber upon the highway."

The Apostle's heart was pierced with grief at such tidings, and calling for a horse he rode quickly towards the mountain where his pupil was then known to dwell. The robbers, however, employed sentinels to guard the mountain passes, and these seized upon S. John and carried him before their leader.

He—the once promising youth—recognised his spiritual Father, and, for very shame, turned and fled.

But the old Apostle would not thus let him go, and following him cried: “Why art thou flying from thy Father? stay, my son, for Jesus has sent me to you.”

The young robber paused at these words, sorrow now succeeded to shame, and he began to weep bitterly; yet he would not stretch out his hand, defiled as it was with crime, to touch the Saint.

But he—the Saint of love—took that sinful hand and touched it with his lips, then he led away the youth to the church, nor was it long before his soul was restored to life, and he re-

gained all the grace he had lost. Thus did John love sinners, because great, and deep, and burning was his love for Him Who died for sinners, and Who came into the world to seek and to save the lost.





S. Stephen, Deacon and Proto-Martyr.

A.D. 33.

STHE name of Stephen signifies *a crown*, and a glorious crown in heaven was surely won by him who was chosen of God to lay down his life for Christ's love, first of all the many martyrs.

S. Stephen was one of six other Jewish men who had been elected to the office of deacon by reason of their well-known piety and wisdom. This office was constituted in the early Church for the purpose of having proper care taken of the poor, and Stephen with his companions were admitted to it by the laying on of hands, and we hear that he was "full of

faith and power, and did great wonders and miracles among the people."

But certain men began to feel great enmity against the holy deacon, and resolving to do him harm, they bribed false witnesses to declare that he had been heard publicly to utter blasphemy against Moses, and also against the Almighty.

S. Stephen was therefore summoned to appear before the council or Sanhedrim upon the charge of saying that Jesus the crucified and rejected Nazarene, should destroy Jerusalem and change all the rites which had been celebrated by the command of Moses.

We hear that as the holy deacon stood before the assembly, his face shone as that of an angel, bright with the love of God, and the thought of the dear Master, Who also had been evil spoken of and dragged before an earthly tribunal.

He made a long address to the council with such power and courage, that they were "cut to the heart at his words," yet gnashed with

their teeth in their passionate anger against the Saint, who, looking upwards, cried : “Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.”

We read that at these words the infuriated people stopped their ears, and with one accord fell upon their victim, casting him violently outside the gates of the city that he might be stoned to death.

Heavily upon the martyr’s head fell the stones, terribly they cut and bruised him ; but he called upon his Master for help, saying : “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

But Jesus had done more than suffer—He had prayed for His murderers ; and Stephen, who was treading the hard, rough, blood-stained way of the Cross, must also pray for those who were taking his life.

“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,” he cried, and thus speaking, he “fell asleep,” the sweet sleep of a holy death, a martyr’s death, which should know such a blissful awakening.

Oh, happy Saint, so soon to follow his crucified Lord ! may we learn from him to love our enemies and to pray for our persecutors, and thus grasp the lesson of his holy life.





S. Clement, Bishop and Martyr.

A.D. 100.

 COMPANION of the great SS. Peter and Paul was Clement, of whom we read in Scripture that he was one of those "whose names are written in the Book of Life."

Though consecrated a bishop by S. Peter, it does not seem that he entered upon the duties of the office until after the death of S. Linus.

At this time the Corinthian Church was troubled by many divisions, and S. Clement wrote an Epistle to its members which was publicly read in the early ages of the Church, though not admitted among the books of Holy Scripture.

About the year 100, S. Clement passed to his heavenly reward, dying for the faith he had loved and taught in life.

No authentic details of his end have been handed down to us, but the legendary story of his martyrdom is one of such beauty that we may well give it here.

The Emperor Trajan was for awhile away from Rome and his imperial duties there, and during his absence the prefect gave orders that Clement should be brought into his presence and commanded to offer sacrifice to the gods.

The holy Bishop refused to do the tyrant's will, and thus was banished to Chersonesus, where he found about two thousand miserable prisoners who had been condemned to labour in the stone quarries.

Their sufferings were many, but greatest of all was the lack of water.

The holy Clement pitied them in the distressing thirst they were enduring, and kneeling, prayed to his Father in Heaven to send them relief.

His prayer finished, he raised his eyes and beheld a pure and spotless lamb upon the summit of a hill, which touched with its foot a fountain of clear water.

The prisoners gladly quenched their thirst, and having witnessed the miraculous answer to S. Clement's prayer, they willingly listened to what he had to tell them of Christ the Lamb of God. Thus many were converted to the truth, and Trajan was so angry on hearing this, that he resolved upon putting an end to the life of Clement.

For this purpose, he caused an anchor to be fastened round the neck of the Saint, and that he should then be cast into the sea, so that his body might never more be seen by the eyes of men.

This order was obeyed ; but at the prayer of Clement, the sea receded some three miles, and in a small ruined temple his body was found with the anchor attached to his neck. The legend tells that upon the anniversary of the Saint's martyrdom, the sea retired as before,

leaving a dry path for those to tread who desired to venerate his relics and to kneel and pray upon the spot which became his tomb.





S. Mary Magdalen.

A.D. 68.

MN studying the history of God's most favoured servants, we find them divided into two classes ; those who, by God's grace, have been preserved in wonderful purity of heart and life, and those who by that same divine grace, are brought from spiritual darkness to light, from sin to sanctity.

Among these last we find Mary Magdalen, the once notorious sinner, who became the most illustrious of all holy women, the Virgin Mother alone excepted.

Her story begins upon the day when Christ sat at meat in the house of the Pharisee, and Magdalen hearing that he was there, went to Him.

Though a sinner, she knows that Jesus is God, and she has resolved to approach Him. Silently she enters, and falling down before the gentle Saviour, began to wash those sacred feet with her tears and to wipe them with her long hair.

An alabaster vase is in her hand full of costly ointment, and opening it she anoints the Lord, not indeed His head—according to the custom of the East—but kneeling, she pours the perfumed oil upon the feet already bathed with tears of penitence and love.

She has not spoken, she has not told out the burden of her sin and shame, for Jesus knows it all, and knows too her deep penitence and love, and so in that brief moment she is forgiven, and the sinner is transformed into the saint.

The Pharisee is displeased with the scene which has taken place, and Christ reading his heart says, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee," and thereupon follows the passage which has encouraged many a penitent sinner

since that day, wherein Jesus declares that
“Many sins are forgiven her because she hath
loved much.”

It was by Mary Magdalen’s conversion that Our Lord seems to have become a friend and a guest in the house of Lazarus and Martha; so loving and so tender a friend that He wept for the grief of these sisters when their brother died, wept tears of human sympathy which Scripture has recorded that we may understand something of what it is to possess the friendship of Jesus.

We see Christ a guest in the home of Bethany, Martha busy in serving, Mary sitting at His feet listening to the words which fell from His lips. Martha complained and said, “Lord, hast thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? speak to her therefore that she help me.”

Both sisters loved Our Lord, though the expression of that love was different; the active service was accepted and prized, yet Jesus declares that “Mary hath chosen

the better part," the silent waiting at His feet.

Time passed, and the hour drew nigh when the Son of man should sacrifice His life upon the Cross, and once more He comes to Bethany, the place where Lazarus had been raised from the dead.

A supper was prepared for Christ there in the house of Simon the leper, and Martha served, while Lazarus was of those who sat at the table with the Master.

Again Mary Magdalen enters with an alabaster vase, as once before she had come in penitence and shame; but now she is the friend of Jesus, she may dare to pour the ointment upon the Sacred Head; then—with perhaps a sudden remembrance of her former guilt—she casts herself at Christ's feet, anointing them with what remains, and "wiping them with the hair of her head."

The disciples are displeased at this homage; it is a waste they think, for the costly spike-

nard might have been well sold and its price given to the poor.

But Jesus reproved them. He knew why Magdalen had done this, He could read all the love and longing of her heart, and He answers, "She hath done what she could," and adds that, "Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her."

The terrible agony was over, the cruel scourging had been endured, the crown of thorns had been wreathed around the head of Jesus the man of sorrows. He had borne the burden of His heavy Cross up the steep mountain side, and now He hangs there bleeding and dying.

Are His friends near, His disciples pressing close, they whom His touch had healed of their diseases, whose dead He had given back to them ? Ah, no ! Only a few loving, faithful women with the Apostle John—Mary the stainless mother, the Immaculate Virgin, by

the side of penitent, loving Magdalen at the foot of the Cross.

The three hours of agony went by, the sacrifice was accomplished, and the bruised, nail-pierced body had been wound in linen cloths and embalmed with fragrant aromatic spices, after the custom of the Jews, and now it was lying in the garden sepulchre until the resurrection morning.

We see Mary Magdalen hurrying there—so early that it is yet dark—to watch and pray; but the stone has been rolled away, the sepulchre is open, and in grief she runs to tell SS. Peter and John, “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre and we know not where they have laid Him.”

Yes it was indeed true that He was not there; the disciples come and look for themselves, and then go away to their own homes.

Only Mary Magdalen remains to weep by the empty tomb, to tell her grief to the white-robed angels, and to one other who is not far off, and whom she thinks must be the gardener.

"They have taken away my Lord," she cries. Ah, well may she weep if she thinks that Jesus is lost to her, well may we weep if by our own unfaithfulness, our cold neglect, our sin, He seems lost to us !

"Mary." No other voice could ever be like His, and turning, she sees Him whom she loves so much and calls by the dear name of "Master."

Perhaps it was in her heart to press her lips again upon those pierced feet; but Jesus says : "Do not touch me." Is His love less than in past days, the days when she came to anoint Him with precious ointment, when she sat so near and listened to the words of Him "Who spake as never man spake?" No; it is because Jesus is no more what He had been ; His body was transfigured now into a higher life, soon he would be at the right hand of the Father, and Magdalen must wait till she may fall at His feet in heaven.

There is no further mention of this penitent, loving woman in Holy Scripture ; but tradition

and early history give us the closing part of her life.

Years had rolled on ; S. Peter had been crucified at Rome, the Virgin Mother had gone to heaven after her patient waiting, and Lazarus, with his sisters, passed to the shores of France. Tradition tells that a boat containing the family of Bethany left the beautiful coast of Palestine, and by some unseen power was guided to Marseilles, where a little congregation of Christians soon gathered around those who could tell the story of Jesus of Nazareth as the story of a dear and well-known friend.

Of Magdalen there is but one remembrance at this port, in the altar bearing her name, which is in the vaults of the abbey of S. Victor. At Aix there was an oratory where it is said she had prayed in the company of S. Maximus, who had accompanied her pilgrimage ; but it was in greater retirement that God had chosen the life of His servant to end. There was a lonely desert in that part, and a

cave in which the Saint should hold wondrous communications with Him she had loved so deeply, and the same impulse which had guided her once to the house of the Pharisee, led her to this retreat. For thirty years her life was one of mingled prayer and penance, many times in each day she was carried by unseen angels from her cave to the rock above it, where visions were granted her which the tongue may not tell, nor the pen describe.

So the hour approached which Magdalen must long have desired, she knew she was about to pass from brief glimpses of untold glory to that which should be eternal, and she longed once more to receive the Blessed Sacrament of love. Not far removed was the oratory of S. Maximus, and when Mary Magdalen knew the hour had come, she was carried by angels to a spot where the holy Bishop had been divinely inspired to wait for her, and where he gave her the holy communion of the Lord's Body and Blood. Then he placed her remains in an

alabaster monument and prepared a grave for himself close by.

At the commencement of the eighth century the Saracens invaded Provence, and thus it was that in fear the monks of S. Cassian, who were dwelling in that part, concealed the crypt in which the relics of S. Mary Magdalen reposed, by a heap of sand and rubbish. They even removed her body from the alabaster tomb to another grave; but they placed two inscriptions in it which should show in some future day what it truly was.

Centuries passed away; the precise spot where the dear Saint lay was forgotten, and strange rumours concerning the removal of her remains went about. At length God inspired the Prince of Salerno to make a pilgrimage for the purpose of discovering the sepulchre of Magdalen, so beloved of Christ, and in the December of 1279 a trench was opened in the old basilica of St. Cassian. Soon the workmen struck on the stone of a grave, and when the prince had it raised, a sweet fragrance was im-

mediately perceived by all; then convinced that his search was rewarded, he caused the sepulchre to be sealed until the Bishops of Provence might be convoked.

In the following spring a vast multitude stood near the tomb of Mary Magdalon when with all honour it was opened, and the eyes of ecclesiastics, of princes, of men, women, and little children, were permitted to see and venerate the bones which had bent in loving adoration at the feet of Jesus. Upon the forehead a small particle of flesh was observed to be transparent, and with one accord the assembly declared their belief that it was the spot once touched by the finger of the Saviour when He said to Magdalen: "Noli me tangere."

Upon the ground where for thirteen hundred years these sacred relics had lain undisturbed, a church was erected by Charles II. of Sicily, but only completely finished by his successors two centuries later.

Beautiful is the story of Mary Magdalen — the story of mingled penitence and love. Sin-

ful, she had nothing to offer Jesus but her tears ; pardoned, she had only her love to give Him.

But what love it was ! so deep, so strong, so abiding ; a love which kept her ever following in the footsteps of Him Who had pardoned her so much, even when His path led to the cross and to the grave.

We too have deeply sinned, but alas ! our penitence is not that of Magdalen, we have not shed such tears as she did, we do not perhaps feel the same unwavering confidence in the forgiveness of Our Lord.

Oh, pray for us, dear Saint, that we may feel a contrition such as thine, for the many sins of our lives ; pray for us too, that rising pardoned from the feet of Christ we may never more turn back from loving and following Him.





The Story of the Holy Cross.

HE Saints of God have ever loved to venerate the instrument on which the Lord of men and angels died to procure the salvation of the world, and the story of the invention or finding of the Cross may well close these sketches of their lives, for it is by that Cross they have obtained their crown in heaven.

A British lady named Helena—the mother of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor—was converted to Christianity about the year 311, and some fifteen years afterwards she so earnestly desired to visit those places rendered sacred by the life, death, and glorious resurrec-

tion of our Divine Lord, that she started to Jerusalem on pilgrimage.

But where once the Holy Sepulchre had been, a temple in honour of Venus was raised; one dedicated to Jupiter stood close by, and Christians were thus driven from the spot where they had loved to pray. The Cross of the Sinless One was hidden from the sight of men, for it was the custom to bury in the earth the cross on which criminals had met their death, as well as every other instrument of their suffering.

S. Helena longed to find the sacred wood, and though three hundred years had gone by since that death on Calvary, she set a number of work-people to dig deeply into the earth at the spot where it seemed most probable the treasure might be found.

It was not in vain. After long and patient search they discovered the sepulchre, and next came upon three crosses, to one of which some writers affirm there was the title affixed, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." The

nails were also found which had pierced the sacred hands and feet of the Saviour of the world.

In order that there might be a full assurance as to which of these three was the Cross of Christ, Macarius, the Bishop of Jerusalem, had them carried to one who at that time lay sick in Jerusalem, for he had a strong faith that by the infinite power of God the wood of the Redeemer's Cross would certainly restore health.

He was not mistaken, for at the touch of that Holy Cross, health and strength were restored to the sick person, and then S. Helena knew that she had indeed discovered the object of her desire.

A portion of it was sent to Constantine, some was entrusted to the care of the Bishop of Jerusalem, while the remainder was reverently conveyed by Helena herself to Rome, there to be deposited in the church which she caused to be erected in honour of the Holy Cross. One of the nails is said to have been placed in

a costly diadem which S. Helena gave to her son, the other three were also carefully preserved.

Constantine built a magnificent Basilica upon the spot where the Cross was discovered, and the day following its solemn consecration, the sacred wood was exposed for the veneration of a vast crowd there assembled.

In the year 614, Jerusalem was conquered by the Persians, and they carried away to their own country the Cross of Christ. Heraclius, the Christian Emperor, sued for peace in vain, he was tired of war and dispirited by reason of the many and great losses which had befallen his army, so he began to give himself to fasting and prayer, imploring the help of the Almighty against his adversaries.

At length these supplications was answered, and the Persians were not only defeated, but forced to retreat into their own land..

Peace was now made, one of its conditions being the restoration of the Holy Cross, after it had been lost to Jerusalem for full fourteen

years. Great was the rejoicing of the Christians then, glad indeed were they to regain the symbol which tells ever of the love of Christ in suffering for us. Heraclius the Emperor desired to make his thanksgiving by bearing the Cross upon his own shoulders up the rough mountain road our Divine Lord had traversed some six hundred years before, bowed beneath its heavy burden. In his costly imperial garb, glittering with gold and gems, Heraclius raised the Cross and strove to mount the steep ascent, but some strong though invisible power hindered him, so that he was unable to advance even one pace.

The Patriarch sees this, and he can tell the reason. "Oh Emperor!" he cries; "thou canst not indeed carry this sacred wood up this rough path clad in rich robes and costly ornaments. It was in poverty and in humiliation that Christ bore the Cross, and thou must imitate Him if thou wouldest indeed bear it also."

Upon this, Heraclius cast aside his glittering

garments, he even removed his shoes, and barefooted and meanly clad, he went along the Viâ Crucis and placed the Cross on Calvary's height. When, in the year 635, this pious Emperor saw that Jerusalem would shortly fall into the hands of enemies, he carried the Holy Cross to Constantinople for safety; but it is believed that some small portion was still preserved in the city, for when the Crusaders had gained possession, we hear of them bearing a part of the Cross, which from century to century had been carefully concealed from the Turks.

In the year 1239, a portion of the sacred wood was sent to S. Louis of France, who built a palace to keep so sacred a relic, and when it was being conveyed to him, he went out to meet it barefoot and with uncovered head.

A large fragment of the Cross is also preserved at Rome.

We are told by tradition that once upon the eve of some great battle a luminous cross appeared to the Emperor Constantine. He was

not a Christian then, but he had heard of the God of Christians, and in his anxiety he called upon Him to aid his army in the coming struggle. About the hour of noon on the day before the encounter was to take place, Constantine beheld a bright Cross in the sky having inscribed upon it in Greek letters, "In this conquer." That night Our Lord Himself appeared in vision to him and bade him use the image of the Cross as his standard in the battle field. Constantine obeyed, and was victorious over his enemy.

"In this conquer." What a motto for us all as we strive to battle against the temptations of the world, our great enemy, and our own weak flesh. Only the Cross can be our safeguard as we pass through life, only the daily following in the way of the Cross can prepare us for the crown hereafter.

"In this conquer." A mighty warfare rages against the Church of God in these days, even though it may often be a covert warfare.

Which shall be the standard under which

we fight? shall we be the soldiers of the Cross,
or the enemies of the Crucified One?

The holy Apostle S. Paul gives our answer;
let us pray that from our inmost hearts we may
be enabled by Divine Grace to say with him,
“God forbid that I should glory, save in the
Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the
world is crucified unto me, and I unto the
world.”

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